

# Journal of the Royal Society of Arts

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## *ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING*

The Council hereby gives notice that, in accordance with the Bye-laws, the 207th Annual General Meeting of the Society, for the purpose of receiving the Council's report and the Financial Statements for 1960, for the Amendment of the Bye-laws, and for the election of officers, will be held on Wednesday, 28th June, 1961, at 3 p.m. at the Society's House.

(By Order of the Council)

KENNETH WILLIAM LUCKHURST,  
*Secretary.*

## *PROGRAMME FOR THE 208TH SESSION*

The Council will shortly be considering the Programme of Meetings for the forthcoming Session. Fellows are invited to forward suggestions for lectures and papers to the Secretary by 9th June.

## *INDUSTRIAL ART BURSARIES EXHIBITION*

The Exhibition of winning and commended designs in the 1960 Industrial Art Bursaries Competition was opened in the Society's exhibition rooms on Tuesday, 2nd May, by Sir John Summerson, the recently appointed Chairman of the National Council for Diplomas in Art and Design. The text of his address is printed on page 540 below.

Welcoming Sir John, Sir Ernest Goodale, Chairman of the Industrial Art Bursaries Board, referred to his influence, as a critic and scholar, in promoting the appreciation of design, and observed that it was particularly appropriate, and gratifying to the Society, that this year's exhibition should be opened by the Chairman of the new National Council. At the end of Sir John's address, a vote of thanks was proposed to him by the Chairman of Council, Mr. Oswald Milne, who also took the opportunity to speak about the continued growth of the Competition. This, he said, was largely owing to the support received from the industries concerned, and the practical results could be seen in the subsequent careers of past Bursary winners, a large percentage of whom are now in full-time

employment as designers in the same spheres of industry which they chose when entering the Society's Competitions.

The exhibition in the Society's building closed on 19th May. It will next be seen at the Belfast College of Art, College Square, Belfast, from 4th to 22nd September, and at other centres later in the year. Details will be announced in subsequent issues of the *Journal*.

### COUNCIL DINNER

The Council gave a dinner party at the Society's House on Thursday, 18th May. Mr. Oswald P. Milne, Chairman of Council, presided, and the guest of honour was Sir Frederic Handley Page, Chairman of the Central Advisory Committee for the Commonwealth Technical Training Week. Also present as guests were Earl De La Warr, Sir John Macpherson, Sir Hilton Poynton, Sir Ronald Gould, Major-General C. Lloyd and representatives of a number of organizations directly interested in the subject of the Week.

### NEW LIST OF FELLOWS

The List of Fellows, corrected to the beginning of April, 1961, has been reprinted, and copies may be obtained free of charge on application to the Registrar.

### MEETING OF COUNCIL

A meeting of Council was held on Monday, 8th May. Present: Mr. Oswald P. Milne (in the Chair); Mrs. Mary Adams; Sir Hilary Blood; the Honble. G. C. H. Chubb; Lord Conesford; Mr. R. E. Dangerfield; Sir George Edwards; Mr. P. A. Le Neve Foster; Mr. John Gloag; Sir Ernest Goodale; Dr. Stanley Gooding; Mr. Milner Gray; Dr. R. W. Holland; Mr. J. C. Jones; Mr. Edgar Lawley; Sir Harry Lindsay; Mr. F. A. Mercer; the Earl of Radnor; Mr. Paul Reilly; Sir Gilbert Rennie; Sir Philip Southwell; Professor S. Tolansky; Mr. G. E. Tonge; Mr. Hugh A. Warren, and Sir Harold Wernher; with Mr. G. E. Mercer (Deputy Secretary) and Mr. J. S. Skidmore (Assistant Secretary).

### ELECTIONS

The following candidates were duly elected Fellows of the Society:

Bailey, Alan, A.T.D., Eccles, Lancashire.  
Barsley, Ronald, L.R.I.B.A., Tunbridge Wells.  
Beesley, Joseph, London.  
Biss, Miss Margaret Ellen, Exeter.  
Bolland-Hensen, Miss Maisie W., Kew, Surrey.  
Brown-Peterside, Gally, M.A., B.Sc., London.  
Buttigieg, Frank, M.I.Mar.E., Pawla, Malta.  
Christopher, John Keith, Lytham St. Annes, Lancashire.  
Cooksey, Arthur Paterson, Dip.Arch., A.R.I.B.A., Sevenoaks, Kent.  
Cowell, Eric Philip, Elstree, Herts.  
Craig, James, Hamilton, Lanarkshire.  
Duke, James Edward, Colchester.

Durie, Alexander Charles, Windlesham, Surrey.  
Hobbs, Frederick John, Haslemere, Surrey.  
Holt, Trevor Brian, A.R.I.B.A., Harrow Weald, Middlesex.  
Jones, John Gwynedd, B.Sc., Zaria, Nigeria.  
King, Joliffe Arnold Milton, London.  
Lewis, Geoffrey Wilson, L.D.S., Tiverton, Devon.  
MacPherson, John Alexander, M.A., Sydney, Nova Scotia, Canada.  
Morgan, Rex Henry, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia.  
Paul, Jagjit Singh, M.B.E., M.A.I.E.E., New Delhi, India.  
Pountney, Jack Dennis, London.  
Rench, William J., London.  
Rundle-Thomas, Gordon, London.  
Sands, Lawrence Alfred, Northwich, Cheshire.  
Stonard, Donald Kenneth, London.  
Tadgell-Foster, Dudley, F.C.I.S., London.  
Williams, Samuel, Nottingham.  
Willsher, John Leonard, London.  
Woodman, Miss Gertrude Violet, London.  
Yeman, John Sidney, Colchester.

The following candidate was elected a Benjamin Franklin Fellow:

Watson, Thomas J., Jr., New York, U.S.A.

The following Fellow of the Society was appointed a Benjamin Franklin Fellow:

d'Andrea, Professor Albert P., New York, U.S.A.

The following candidates were duly elected Associates of the Society as winners of Industrial Art Bursaries in the 1960 Competition:

Floyd, Miss Hilary Ann, London.

Mackereth, Miss June, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

The following Company was duly admitted into association with the Society:

Trollope & Colls Ltd., London.

#### ALBERT MEDAL FOR 1961

A name was agreed upon for submission to H.R.H. the President.

#### BALLOTING LIST

The Balloting List for the new Council was prepared for the Annual General Meeting.

#### EXAMINATIONS

It was reported that 79,912 entries had been received for the Whitsun series of examinations, a decrease of 445 from the corresponding figure for 1960.

#### ORDINARY NATIONAL CERTIFICATE IN BUSINESS STUDIES

Approval was given to arrangements for a scheme for a new examination for the award of the Ordinary National Certificate in Business Studies, to be administered by the Society in collaboration with the London Chamber of Commerce.

#### ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A quantity of financial and other business was transacted.

# THE TIMBER INDUSTRY

*A paper by*

RODNEY PERRY

*Chairman, Timber Development Association, read to  
the Society on Wednesday, 8th February, 1961,  
with the Rt. Honble. the Earl of Radnor, K.G.,  
K.C.V.O., Chairman, The Forestry Commission, and a  
Vice-President of the Society, in the Chair*

THE CHAIRMAN: The Timber Development Association, of which Mr. Perry is Chairman, is well known to those of us who are concerned in the timber industry as an organization which is doing work of the utmost value in encouraging the use of timber and finding new outlets for its use. As Chairman of the Forestry Commission, I regret the fact that they deal not only with home timber but also with the foreign timber which supplies most of our needs. However, that is neither here nor there. The fact is that the organization does a great deal of good work. I might add that Mr. Perry is also Director of a timber company and was a student with the T.D.A. in his earlier days.

*The following paper, which was illustrated with a film, was then read.*

## THE PAPER

The timber industry is extremely varied and complex. There is hardly an industry concerned with the manufacture of finished goods, or a public utility, which does not use timber in some form or degree. Few of them, however, depend entirely or even mainly on timber and most of the manufacturers of wood goods or components are ancillary to or supply other industries. It may be shown that the value of about 80 per cent of all the timber consumed in the United Kingdom represents only about 4 per cent of the gross output of the industries which use it.

In these circumstances, although the turnover of the timber trade is substantial, amounting to over £250 million per annum, it is impossible to present a picture of a well-defined, homogeneous timber industry, handling and processing the material from the raw state to the finished product. On the contrary, a clear distinction has to be drawn between the timber trade on the one hand, importing distributing and marketing the material and conducting research and development in the interests of its continued use, and on the other, a wide range of industries using timber and manufactured timber components as their merits and costs may dictate but taking little or no financial responsibility for the research essential to its technological development. Between these two extremes there is the group of woodworking industries which depends wholly or substantially on the use of the material and which produces manufactured wooden articles or components. These industries are tending to become more specialized and to take a keener interest in technological research and development. Their contribution in this field is still, however, sporadic and limited. The furniture industry is a somewhat

special case both as regards the end commodity it produces and its special organization for research.

#### THE TIMBER TRADE

The timber trade consists of persons, firms and companies whose primary interest is the production, importation and distribution of timber and plywood. Timber is defined as including wood in all forms from the round, felled log to linear sawn or machined material such as floorings or mouldings, but excluding all manufacture beyond that point, such as joinery or casemaking. Pulp and paper are not included and wall board and particle boards are at present excluded also.

The persons, firms or companies in the trade fall into the broad groups of agents and brokers, importers and/or merchants. In the main, agents and brokers are the appointed representatives of overseas shippers and are remunerated by them by commission on sales. They are established in the United Kingdom mostly in London, but also in certain of the main ports, such as Liverpool, Hull and Glasgow.

The importers purchase in bulk through the medium of the agents and re-sell either direct to consumers or to merchants. In general, the merchants hold more specialized stock than importers to meet the needs of particular customers in particular trades and localities. In addition there are specialized and sectional interests in softwood, hardwood, plywood, pitwood, staves and cooperage, veneers, sleepers and poles. Many of the units of the trade have minor interests in manufacture as distinct from distribution, particularly in joinery, casemaking, flooring and, latterly, in the fabrication of timber structures. This tendency to vertical integration is growing under the economic stimulus of relatively higher profitability through raising the value/volume ratio of sales.

The home-grown-timber merchants are numerically large, but consist chiefly of small operators with limited resources. The larger firms are generally importers also and, as such, are members of the Association through their membership of the Timber Trade Federation. It is a cardinal principle of the Association that there shall be no discrimination between timbers of different origin—Commonwealth, foreign or domestic. Both the English and Scottish home trade associations are represented on the Council of the Timber Development Association and approximately 25 per cent of home trade firms are members.

#### WOODWORKING INDUSTRIES

The specialized industries producing wooden articles and components are also diverse in nature. Some have only recently begun to emerge as distinct industries and have as yet little formal organization. Statistical data on their output, turnover and consumption of timber is frequently inextricably linked up with those of allied industries.

The timber engineering industry provides a striking example. Virtually created by the Timber Development Association, it has as yet no separate formal organization of its own, but most of the firms engaged in timber engineering construction are registered as Approved Manufacturers of the Association. Many of these firms also produce small prefabricated buildings or components and often do not draw a clear line of demarcation between the two classes of manufacture.

The following is a list of the main woodworking industries, in the order of their importance as consumers of timber and plywood, which is expressed in percentages of the total turnover of these materials.

<i>Industries</i>	<i>Estimated consumption of total turnover of timber and plywood</i>
	%
Packaging and containers ... ..	20
Furniture and cabinet making ... ..	18
Joinery (windows, doors) ... ..	4
Prefabricated timber buildings ... ..	2
Engineered timber structures ... ..	2
Hardwood flooring manufacturers ... ..	2
Fencing ... ..	2

The figures give some indication of the importance of the woodworking industries as timber markets. Between them they account for about 50 per cent of the total timber and plywood consumed in the United Kingdom, the balance being consumed by industries not directly concerned in the manufacture of wood goods. Some of the woodworking industries, such as packaging, joinery and timber buildings industries, consume mainly softwoods and to some extent plywood. Others, such as the furniture and the wood flooring industries are mainly hardwood consumers. The fencing industry consumes much of the home-grown timber and timbers of grades and lengths which are generally unsuited for other uses.

#### OTHER TIMBER-CONSUMING INDUSTRIES

A complete description and classification of the timber-using industries would embrace a substantial proportion of the 156 sub-divisions of the Standard Industrial Classification orders. However, apart from the specific timber manufacturing industries described above, the bulk of the remaining timber trade is directed to a few major industries where there are traditional markets for a number of well-established uses. The following table lists these industries in the order of their importance as timber consumers, the consumption being expressed again as a percentage of the total turnover of timber and plywood.

<i>Industries</i>	<i>Estimated consumption as percentage of total turn- over of timber and plywood</i>
	%
* Building and civil engineering ... ..	22
Mining and quarrying ... ..	12
Motor vehicles, railway carriages, wagons and trains	6
Shipbuilding and repairing ... ..	3
Other industries (including brushes, domestic wood- ware, ladders, coffins, tools, textiles, boots and shoes, toys, perambulators, games and sports, small arms, etc.) ... ..	7

\* Excluding joinery and timber buildings and shopfitting.

The building industry is the largest consumer of timber, particularly if the consumption in carcassing and carpentry is added to the figure for joinery, flooring and fencing. The share of the building industry in the total turnover of the timber trade would then be about a third of the whole.

## SCIENTIFIC STATUS

*Research Facilities*

Individual firms within the trade do not in general undertake research, but rely on the appropriate research stations of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, the research associations and the development associations. This is also true of the smaller firms in the timber-using industries, but it is impossible to generalize over a wide range of industries which include nationalized undertakings, large shipbuilding, aircraft and vehicle manufacturers, in addition to export packaging specialists, who maintain research establishments on their own account. Such undertakings are generally concerned with a wide range of materials and processes and look to the material-producing trades to provide the necessary research facilities for the raw material concerned. Many of the industries are not served by a research association.

With the exception of the furniture industry, which has the Furniture Development Council, none of the timber manufacturing industries has at present collective research facilities or research programmes of its own.

The timber packaging industry, the second in importance as a consumer of timber, has no research organization of its own. While the Printing, Packaging and Allied Trades Research Association's research on packaging problems is of general interest to the industry, it has little bearing on the main problems facing it. These problems arise largely from the obsolescence of its designs, fastenings, production methods and machinery in the face of a rising tide of the newer materials and packaging techniques. They could be solved only by systematic research based on the material itself and its technological potentialities.

It has been noted that the building and civil engineering industries constitute the largest outlets for timber and for a number of the timber manufacturing industries. The Building Research Station, although concerned with practically all other materials and techniques, has not undertaken research or development work on timber components or the various applications of timber in building. Work at the Forest Products Research Laboratory has on the whole been restricted to basic research on the properties and behaviour of the material and to applied research on selected industrial processes such as seasoning, preservation and manufacture of plywood. As far as is known, none of the large building and contracting organizations which have research laboratories of their own carries out any investigations on timber products or uses.

Similarly, in coal-mining, in shipbuilding, in the vehicles and wagons industries—in all of which there has been a steady decline in the use of timber over the years—no specific research and experimentation facilities exist to effect improvements in the applications of timber and to investigate the possibilities inherent in the recent technological advances in other fields of timber utilization.

The Trade has realized that, in the circumstances of old established trades and allied industries, with a newly awakening interest in technological development, the early stages of its work would be concerned with technical education. As a result of the policy adopted, an increasing number of firms in both trade and industry now have technically trained employees capable of understanding and applying new knowledge, and there is now a trend towards the encouragement of research and *ad hoc* investigations in firms of quite modest size.

### *Research Expenditure*

It is estimated that the total expenditure on research and development in the timber trade, timber manufacturing and timber-using industries, *including* the Forest Products Research Laboratory and the relevant expenditure of the Forestry Commission, the Furniture Development Council, the Printing, Packaging and Allied Trades Research Association and the Timber Development Association, is less than £350,000 per annum, or about 0.05 per cent of the total value of all manufactured or assembled wood goods.

### DISTRIBUTION AND SIZE

The size of trade unit within the timber trade ranges from the small retail yard selling mainly to the general public, up to the large importing companies with branches scattered throughout the United Kingdom and serving the needs of the big industrial consumers. In terms of turnover, the limits are from £1,000 per annum (probably in conjunction with other commodities) up to £10,000,000 per annum, but even the largest does no more than 5 per cent of the total trade. It is estimated that of some 1,150 companies, approximately 79 per cent of the total have a turnover of less than £250,000, 11 per cent between £250,000 and £500,000, 6 per cent between £500,000 and £1,000,000 and about 4 per cent over £1,000,000.

The report on the Timber Trade contained in the 1954 Census of Production overlaps but is not identical with the trade structure previously outlined. It relates to establishments engaged wholly or mainly in the manufacture of saw mill products, more finished timber goods and cork products. The analysis of 1,657 of the larger establishments reveals that 73 per cent employ less than 50, 18 per cent between 50 and 100, 5 per cent between 100 and 200, and 4 per cent over 200. Of the establishments concerned, 21 per cent are situated in London and the South East and 14 per cent in Scotland, the remainder being fairly evenly distributed over England with an increase in density towards the South and West (excluding Wales, which accounts for less than 4 per cent).

### STATE OF TRADE

#### *Imports and Home Production of Timber*

Statistics are available of imports and home production of softwood, hardwood, plywood and pitwood for the years 1954-8. Official figures for 1959 are not yet available but it is known that they show a marked recovery from the trade depression of 1958. The figures show very considerable fluctuations in the volume of trade from year to year. This is understandable in a trade which is entirely dependent

on the state of its manufacturing and consuming industries. Hire purchase restrictions in 1956 caused short-time working in the furniture industry and this was immediately reflected in the sale of both hardwood and plywood. The credit squeeze and restrictions on capital investment, particularly in building, affected softwood, hardwood and plywood, and the lifting of the restrictions resulted in an immediate expansion of the timber trade. The special Suez surcharge imposed in November, 1956, increased freight rates for Far East hardwoods and, on account of freight charges and dollar appreciation, sales of softwood from British Columbia were more than halved. This dependence on the state of the consuming industries and sensitivity to economic policy and the impact of foreign affairs make it extremely difficult to distinguish long-term trends from the immediate effects of recent events.

In the pattern of trading there have been certain marked changes. In soft-woods there was a decline of imports from Russia and the Baltic States and an increase in the share of Sweden, Finland and, until the last two years, Canada. The sources of supply of hardwoods have changed significantly, with a marked drop in North American imports and a great increase in the West African trade. In plywoods the most notable change has been the growth and development of the home industry which supplies about 15 per cent of total requirements. Finland remains the most important source of imported plywoods. Imported timber in 1958 accounted for 84 per cent of total consumption in the United Kingdom and constituted 5 per cent of the total of all imports into the United Kingdom. Home-grown production of softwood and hardwood has changed little in the past five years.

#### *Woodworking Industries*

Provisional results of the census of production for 1958 which were published recently show that goods produced and work done in the timber and miscellaneous wood and cork manufacturing industry (excluding furniture and shop and office fittings) reached a value of £226 million, compared with £167.6 million in 1954. The net output of the industry was £84.7 million compared with £63.6 million in 1954.

No detailed figures are available for this period for the separate timber manufacturing industries. Moreover, timber buildings are grouped in the census with buildings generally. The significant growth of the timber engineering industry may be gauged, however, from the returns of firms registered as Approved Manufacturers of the T.D.A. for the years 1957 and 1958. This undertaking is fairly new; it was created by the T.D.A. and registration only began in 1956. The available statistics give the following picture of growth and development:

Year		Number of Approved Manufacturers	Declared Turnover £ million
1957	...	100	4
1958	...	118	7
1959	...	121	10 (estimated)

*Other Consuming Industries*

The turnover trends of consuming industries such as mining, shipbuilding and general building will have some bearing on timber trends, in proportion to the value of timber in their gross output. The following figures show that, however important these industries may be as markets for timber, the value of timber in their output is relatively small:

<i>Industry</i>				<i>Value of timber consumed as percentage of gross output</i>
				%
Building and civil engineering	...	...	...	4
Coal mining	...	...	...	5
Shipbuilding	...	...	...	3
Transport and vehicles	...	...	...	2
Brushes, toys, games and sports	...	...	...	4

On the other hand the value of timber in some of the typical timber products forms a high percentage of the total, as follows:

				%
Furniture	...	...	...	28
Joinery	...	...	...	40
Packaging	...	...	...	44

In the typical consumer industries technological and other changes may have considerably more bearing on timber than turnover trends.

*Employment Trends*

There has been a fairly steady decline in employment in the timber and saw-milling industries, falling from 96,800 in 1953 to 87,600 in 1958, an average fall of nearly 2 per cent per annum. In 1959 the figure rose to 88,400, an increase of a little less than 1 per cent. There has been a marked decline in sawmilling since the end of the war, a decline which is likely to be hastened by the implementation of the European Free Trade Association arrangements, and it is not thought that employment will exceed 90,000 under the most favourable conditions likely to be experienced.

*Exports*

Timber is incorporated in practically all exports, either in the manufactured goods or in packaging or in both. The value is, however, in most cases not separated from the finished product and, therefore, statistics are not available showing the quantity and value of wood and plywood which is re-exported. Headings under which the re-export of timber is concealed include packaging and wooden containers, shipbuilding and ship repairing, textile machines and accessories, motor vehicles and to a lesser degree practically all kinds of British export.

Such figures as are available for the export of manufactured wooden articles show a steady increase in recent years. The volume is, however, small compared

with that of imported manufactured timber goods in the same category, which has shown some decline over the same period. The figures suggest the potential possibilities both of increasing the export of timber manufactures and simultaneously reducing the importation of finished timber goods. Success in this direction must ultimately depend on competitive ability based on further technological development and improved design by comparison with international standards, the necessity for which will progressively increase as the effect of the European Free Trade Association becomes apparent.

### *Profitability*

Information on the profitability of the timber trade is not readily available. There are only some twenty public companies engaged mainly in the distribution of timber and whose trading results are available. None discloses its turnover or its outside interest in other commodities which are generally regarded as being of higher profitability.

The report of the Commissioners of Inland Revenue shows the net trading profits of the companies engaged in manufacture of wood and cork as follows:

<i>Item</i>			<i>1952/3</i>	<i>1953/4</i>	<i>1954/5</i>	<i>1955/6</i>
Turnover	...	...	100%	100%	100%	100%
Net trading profit	...	...	8%	7.4%	7.2%	6.6%

This level of profits is somewhat below that of most competitive manufacturing industries. The grouping further includes manufacturing industries not regarded as forming part of the timber trade, for which, as already stated, no separate figures are available.

### FUTURE PROSPECTS OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY

The factors which influence the future prospects of the industry as a whole are firstly, the industrial and economic conditions of the community at large, and secondly, the extent to which timber can compete with alternative materials. The first and most direct influence on trade arises from national policy in regard to capital investment and consumer purchasing power, the second from the rate of scientific and technological development in relation to that of other materials, notably aluminium, concrete, plastics and steel. In the context of this survey it is the second of these factors which is relevant. Already it is possible to say that there are few, if any, articles made of wood which cannot be made of other materials at some greater or lesser sacrifice in terms of amenity, convenience or cost. This is not so much due to the inherent properties of the raw materials concerned as to the development of processes and treatments which modify those properties. In recent years there has been a growing awareness of this, with the result that a great deal of interest has been shown in research and development directed towards processing and assembly methods. This has resulted in some increase in the competitive ability of timber and indeed the stabilization of the timber trade in recent years, and even the expansion of some of the timber industries—notably timber engineering and the fabrication of timber buildings—reflects in considerable measure the

research and development which has been invested in the fields of technological development and design.

The position and prospects are not, however, the same in all the woodworking and other timber-consuming industries. The following is an assessment of the likely trends in some of the more important timber markets:

1. *Housing and building generally.* The trend towards a smaller consumption of timber per unit of dwelling is likely to continue, mainly as a result of the changing pattern of dwellings and the higher proportion of flatted dwellings in relation to the total to be provided. This, however, may be offset by an increase in the use of timber in the form of claddings, curtain walling and possibly also framing for small houses. In the large programme of multi-storey buildings, hospitals and schools which lies ahead there is ample scope for the development of the use of timber for a variety of components on a considerably larger scale than in the past. The extent to which this materializes will depend on the one hand on intensified research and development and on the other on the removal of some of the more hampering bye-laws in force at present.
2. *Packaging.* A further decline of the small case and container industry is likely unless new techniques and designs are introduced. The larger sections of the industry engaged on big crates and packing cases will continue to depend on the state of the export market generally. The trends for the use of more plywood and other manufactured wood boards is likely to continue.
3. *Furniture.* The overall timber requirements are not likely to be greatly changed, but the balance towards solid hardwoods and board products and veneers may shift still further in favour of the latter. The European Free Trade Association plans will materially affect the competitive ability of the industry against foreign competition and will require a more strenuous effort to improve designs.
4. *Joinery.* The joinery industry should continue to increase its sales still further with the boom in building. The prospect of an increase in imported joinery from the Scandinavian countries with the advent of the European Free Trade Association will give new impetus to the need for increased efficiency in many of the plants of the industry. The industry has great opportunities in developing new markets for curtain walling and built-in fittings.
5. *Timber engineering.* On the showing of the past two or three years the timber engineering industry is likely to advance rapidly to a more prominent position among the wood-working industries.
6. *Mining.* Research will be required into new techniques and designs for the timbering of mines if further decline through competition (mainly by steel) is to be avoided.

By and large the development and, indeed, the ultimate survival of a viable timber trade will depend on—

- (a) the extent to which technological developments and improvements of timber and its products will keep pace with rapidly changing requirements in the consumer industries, and
- (b) the extent of rationalization and mechanization of the processing of the material and its products to enable a competitive level of prices to be kept.

To-day, by the standards of the more advanced sections of industry, investment by the timber trade and industries in research and development is extremely low. The rate of capital investment in buildings, plant and equipment also falls very short of that of the industries concerned with the more advanced competitive materials.

### DISCUSSION

MR. BRYAN LATHAM: I do not want to pick holes, but I should like to ask Mr. Perry where he got the figure of six or seven times for the increase in the value of timber. My own information and an official document says that it is more like four to five. For instance, we all saw a splendid mahogany tree felled and split up. Before the war you could have bought a splendid plank of that for about 7s. 6d. to 8s. Now you would have to give 25s. or 30s., but that is not six or seven times. Similarly you could in pre-war days have bought very good oak for 10s. or 12s., now you might have to give 35s. or 40s. On the question of soft woods: a wholesaler before the war could have bought his wood unsorted quality for about £18 to £22, and now I suppose he would have to give about £90, £100 or £105; but this is still not six or seven times. I raise this point because we have eminent architects present who want to design in timber and they will not want to do so if they think the price of the commodity has gone up six or seven times. I am sorry to issue this challenge to Mr. Perry so early on in the discussion.

THE LECTURER: It is perfectly obvious that Mr. Latham's arithmetic is better than mine and it is quite obvious why he makes so much more money than I do! Actually my remark was an interpolation. I had not got anything written down here and I was just throwing out the point that there was this new factor controlling the price of this commodity. It is not that the timber merchants are overcharging the public for their commodity, it is because there has been an entirely new trend in world commerce and there is a double call for the material that we are selling. I think I would be prepared to argue with Mr. Latham that in soft wood the price would be near to six times what it was in the '30s.

MR. A. POWIS BALE, M.I.MECH.E.: I am rather surprised that Mr. Perry did not mention the national economic aspect in relation to the ordinary user—whether he is a retailer or a builder—and the economies which could be made in the use of timber: by impregnating timber with creosote, for example, which makes a vast difference to its length of life. If anybody wants that stuff for the garden he meets extreme difficulty in obtaining it, even in a big town like Kingston-on-Thames.

Mr. Perry spoke about the number of employees going down; I think he said it was by 2 per cent. That seems a very small reduction if the timber merchants are making use of the wonderful up-to-date woodworking machinery that is available and laying out their mills properly. The average timber mill is cramped and stuffy, and the waste in handling the timber is terrific: there is some of the profits gone right down the drain.

THE LECTURER: It is of course of great national importance that modern techniques and developments in timber should be widely known. I have taken this particular

occasion as one for a survey of the trade as it is rather than as an opportunity for propaganda; in which case it would have been my duty to have sung more loudly the praises of timber in comparison with other materials. I wholly agree that the man in the street should not only know about but be able to get hold of timber properly processed, conditioned and treated.

You thought that 2 per cent was a very small fall. Yes; but it has been an expanding market and it represents some efficiency increase. It is probably a difference of 4 or 5 per cent instead of 2 per cent as it looks from the actual figures. So I think we have been increasing our efficiency, but I do agree that as a trade we have changed slowly, particularly in country districts.

MR. L. J. GRIFFIN: The speaker has underlined the amount of research in the timber trade. I am a designer for a manufacturer of products which include all sorts of materials and quite a lot of timber, and our experience is that all development, design and new ideas which are introduced come from us and not from manufacturers of our components. We have tried to get them to try new ideas, and we meet the usual conservative talk, but owing to economics we have to use half the timber we have been using and then next year half again, and so on. I feel that this is one of the main problems of the timber industry. There is nobody set aside to think of what to do with timber, to ply their clients with information. All design to-day in the timber trade comes from the clients who are engineers. This may be the right way, but I should like to know if the speaker accepts that, or whether he thinks the timber trade should provide more design and development?

THE LECTURER: I did stress the fact that far too little is being spent on research, but I would yet underline that a tremendous amount of research has been done and is still being done. In the last few years there has been a complete change in the attitude of the layman toward timber in engineering. You as a designer, and other engineers, have greatly added to the store of knowledge of the Association, but I think it is right to say that the industry itself has to start this here. When I say the industry I mean right the way through, from supplier through merchant and woodworking industries into consumer use. It is right that everybody who is touching timber should be prepared to pay his whack and make this whole development programme bigger, and of course it affects the layman as well. As a community we are interested in the proper development and use of this material. Through D.S.I.R., of course, the community is being represented in part of the expenditure. But I am the last to say that we have gone as far as we should. The Association try to encourage fresh thinking. Much has been done, but there is still a tremendous amount to do.

SIR HAROLD EMMERSON, G.C.B., K.C.V.O.: The speaker referred to the large number of small firms and the small margin of profit, and on the other hand to the need for more research, more efficiency and so on. I wonder if he would care to give us his view on the desirability of larger units in the trade?

THE LECTURER: This is a difficult one. May I give a personal viewpoint only? I think there is no doubt that the most profitable unit within the trade (I am not sure that I ought to be quoted on this) comes in the range of about a quarter of a million pounds turnover. The profit level in that type of business is usually better than in the larger type, and I think that the proper sort of profit for any trade is the maximum profit which can be made to bring complete satisfaction to both buyer and seller. I would say that the best future for the trade is not take-over, where the small firm loses its identity, but far greater co-operation within, and perhaps the developing of group types of business.

MR. OSWALD P. MILNE, F.R.I.B.A., J.P. (Chairman of Council of the Society): We hear a great deal about the need for efficiency, the need to leave more and more to

machinery, and generally the implication is that when this is done the product will be cheaper; but it seems to me that ever since we have used machinery and had all this tremendous business of getting timber out of Africa, instead of the price falling, it continually goes up. What is the explanation?

THE LECTURER: I wish I knew. I think it true that mechanization very rarely produces a cheaper commodity. It is possible now for me to bulldoze my garden in a matter of an afternoon, but I find that the equipment required to do that piece of work costs me just as much as if I paid a man to dig for five to six months. I do not know why; I suppose it is a very careful 'trade balance'! It needs a much cleverer man than I to answer your question.

MR. LATHAM: I should like to take the side of the speaker! I have done a lot of research into all this. Surely the rise in the price of timber is basically due to the rise in the cost of living throughout the whole world, and hence the great rise in the price of wages which you have to pay? We in the timber trade are quite willing to see a stride forward in the standard of living, but that is the basis of it all. Before the war in West Africa you got an African worker for a few shillings a week; now, quite rightly, he wants a pound a week, or more.

MR. J. A. SCHOFIELD: Reverting to Mr. Bryan Latham's comment that Mr. Perry's statement of the price of timber (as being some seven times its pre-war cost) was exaggerated: Mr. Latham went on to say that the farthest back he could go, he could only remember the price as being £14 to £16 per standard, and that therefore four to five times the price is nearer the mark.

It might be of interest to know that in 1913, unsorted Swedish Redwood was about £12 per standard C.I.F., and on to-day's comparable stocks it would be nearer eight times the price C.I.F.

In connection with a question asked—why is it not possible to buy pressure-treated timber from stock?—the difficulty surely is, that in view of the multiplicity of sizes, lengths and profiles that are required, the amount of pressure-treated timber, whether by creosote or other chemicals, that would have to be stocked in order to satisfy immediate demand, would be considerable. I do feel that if only architects would get down to more standardization of building components, and reduce the number in general use, it would help merchants or stockists considerably in holding supplies of ready treated timber.

Thirdly, if I may also refer to your own paper on the question of T.D.A., you did point out that an architect friend of yours was not too happy about timber and its uses. Is it therefore not possible for the T.D.A. to get more architectural knowledge written into the curriculum of architectural examinations?

THE LECTURER: I should be delighted. The Association has done all it could and is in a very happy relationship with the R.I.B.A., but the course is so completely filled and the time is so concentrated that it has been said that the study of timber cannot be included at this particular point. It is, however, something which as an Association we are not happy about. We feel it right that there should be more understanding of this material, and a number of extra-mural lectures have been arranged. Every effort is being made to carry information to the specifier and to the architect.

I sympathize very greatly with the difficulty of standardization. You meet the same problem within the trade in another way where you get the old problem of C.L.S. as opposed to the Scandinavian specifications. I should like to see standardization. I should like to see the general public become more preservative-minded and prepared to pay a little more money for a conditional material. (In that case you might get to the point where most of the stock which you kept could be pre-treated.)

MR. GRIFFIN: On this mechanization problem: in the wood industry there is very

good mechanization of hand-made joints. You can have a machine which will make multiple joints, but I am more interested in mechanizing the assembly of products. We have achieved this, but the manufacturer then says, 'Look what you have done! Your products are made in half the time, so my shop needs twice the orders.' We cannot give them, but we meet the problem successfully in our own production.

THE LECTURER: Again I do not know what constructive suggestion one can make. All I know is that the same sort of problem occurs everywhere. I remember in timber production during the war first of all we were short of labour; then as soon as we got our organization right in the woods, we were short of transport; and after we got the transport right then we had not got enough saw mills. Once we had got the saw mills up to capacity we had to start again because we had not enough supplies to keep them going! It is the sort of problem that always arises with streamlining and I do not think it is peculiar to our own trade.

THE CHAIRMAN: The time has come for me to express our most grateful thanks to Mr. Perry for a very interesting paper and film. I would not, I think, be human, were I not to point to the fact that the whole bias of the talk and the questions has been applied to imported timber. If the Royal Society of Arts and Mr. Perry are both here in five or six years time we might perhaps have a further paper from Mr. Perry on the subject of home-grown timber. He was quite right to put the emphasis on the foreign timber to-day, because the home-grown production is I think roughly only about 8 per cent of the requirements in this country. Mr. Perry, we thank you very much indeed for your paper.

*The vote of thanks to the Lecturer was carried with acclamation, and the meeting then ended.*

# THE INFLUENCE OF THE FESTIVAL OF BRITAIN ON DESIGN TO-DAY

*The Peter Le Neve Foster Lecture by*

**SIR GERALD BARRY**

*read to the Society on Wednesday, 15th February, 1961,  
with Professor R. Y. Goodden, C.B.E., A.R.I.B.A.,  
Master, Faculty of Royal Designers for Industry,  
in the Chair*

THE CHAIRMAN: Peter Le Neve Foster, in whose memory this lecture was instituted, was Secretary of this Society from 1853 to 1879 and the lecture was endowed by his descendants, one of whom, a great-grandson and his namesake, Peter Le Neve Foster, is to-day a Member of the Council of the Society. That Secretary was himself the third generation of his family to have membership of this Society and there has in fact been an unbroken association of the Le Neve Foster family with the Society from its earliest days.

Sir Gerald Barry's theme itself traces a line from the past to the present and is especially well suited to this occasion. Mr. Barry, as he then was, invited me in the fairly early days of the planning of the theme of the South Bank Exhibition of the Festival of Britain to sit in on a discussion he was to have with one of the experts he had appointed to develop that part of the theme which eventually became the display in the Lion and Unicorn Pavilion. I remember that the third party at this meeting proposed amongst other things that Dr. Johnson should be substantially represented in this part of the theme. Mr. Barry turned to me and said, 'Well, from the display point of view do you agree with that?', and without much thought I said, 'Certainly, I would agree with that. Johnson was such a many-sided man'. Mr. Barry took up those words in a tone of voice which seemed to me to contain a certain amount of scorn. 'You think he is a many-sided man', he said. In the eventual Lion and Unicorn display Samuel Johnson, it seemed to me, was given rather less scope than his cronies in Fleet Street were wont to allow him, but then Sir Gerald knows his Fleet Street—which brings me to the point. Whatever the rights and wrongs of that occasion no one, not he himself, can dispute that Sir Gerald is a many-sided man. He came to the Festival of Britain from a most distinguished place in the world of literature, and on leaving it he disclosed a passion for agriculture which to me at least had been quite unsuspected. Now for an hour he returns to the theme of his triumph of ten years ago and we are fortunate enough to be in his company.

*The following lecture, which was illustrated with lantern slides, was then delivered.*

## THE LECTURE

To be asked to talk about the Festival of Britain after all these years is rather like being taken to revisit the scene of the crime. Nearly nine years have passed since I had the honour of being invited to give the three Cantor Lectures about the Festival of Britain, then recently defunct. In May of this year it will have been in the grave ten years. Viewed from this distance of time, what can one usefully and objectively say about it—about its influences, if any, good or bad; about what

it set out to do, achieved or failed in; about the extent to which there are, or can be, any discernible patterns of development deriving from what was set on foot in 1951?

I ended those Cantor Lectures in 1952 with an attempted summing up, and I posed some questions. I said that in an undertaking of this kind any attempt to strike an absolute balance-sheet was at that time (and I think is still) impossible. There were too many imponderables that could not be resolved. Such questions as its ultimate effect on our export trade, its impact at the time on home morale, on our prestige abroad—both then important things. What, if anything, I asked, did the Festival do to drive home to industry and the man in the street the value of research and good design if we are to continue to keep our economic place in the world? What influence would it have on the architecture and design of tomorrow? What impact did it have on public taste? Would it raise the status of artist and scientist in public estimation? I was not quite so foolish as to attempt any answers to those questions then; but I fancy some of them are still valid to-day.

I don't feel the need this afternoon to make a speech for the defence. The Festival doesn't need defending. But in order to assess its value fairly we should first recall what it was about. The directive which its organizers were given in 1948 was this: the Festival of Britain was 'To display the British contribution to civilization, past, present and future, in the arts, in science and technology, and in industrial design'. That was a phrase to be repeated so often during the next few years that I cannot speak it even to-day without a slightly traumatic reaction. But the point to note is this: the Festival was not an event confined to matters of design, or even to exhibitions. It had a much wider objective. It was intended as an act of national re-assessment. After a decade of war, deprivation and actual and metaphorical darkness, it was to be a moment for remembrance of things past and of incentive to things future. Although its centrepiece was the South Bank Exhibition in London, it had its ramifications all over the Kingdom. Much of what it set out to do it could only do once, because the circumstances were unique. It was a morale-booster, and, in the most literal sense, an eye-opener. I remember the police having to close the Embankment to traffic on the first few nights as the crowds poured down to the River to see the lights. It was a sudden release of spirit. That is not something you can assert has any value ten years later, yet to forget it is to forget what was one of the chief aims and fulfilments of the Festival. First and foremost it created gaiety.

I shall always remember the remark made at that time by, of all people, the Archbishop of Canterbury, about the 'Skylon'. It had, he said, 'the supreme merit of serving no useful purpose whatsoever'. I remember also being accosted on the Fairway one rare fine summer's evening by a visitor from the United States. Pointing to the Skylon he asked me 'What is that?'. 'The Skylon', I said. 'What's a Skylon?', he persisted. Nonplussed, I replied in the manner of Gertrude Stein, 'A Skylon is a Skylon'. So then he asked, 'But what does it *do*?' 'To tell you the truth', I said, now slightly nettled, 'It doesn't do anything'. 'Well then', he demanded, looking more and more bewildered, 'What's it *for*?' This put me on my mettle. 'Its not for anything', I replied, sternly; 'Its for fun'. He went away

sadly, like the young man in the Bible. I labour this trifle deliberately. Apart from the special needs of that particular time, sheer gaiety of building can have some purpose (especially on an Exhibition site) if it helps to excite interest in the value of environment. In his inaugural address as President of the Royal Institute of British Architects last November Sir William Holford said this, and I think it is worth quoting in this context:

When the viewing gallery is opened overlooking a site excavation, when scaffolding climbs into the sky, and rooms take shape, and great interiors like the Festival Hall or Coventry Cathedral fill with sound, then the neuroses of urban life fall away—and they do not only fall away for the moment. This is a lasting vision you have when you suddenly feel architecture around you. The problem is to get as many people as possible to *participate* in the adventure of building, and having participated to remain attached, so that the environment as a whole improves.

How far did the South Bank Exhibition get people to 'participate in the adventure of building and, having participated to remain attached'? That is a fair enough question to ask, however difficult to answer (though I think we can trace a few clues). But first of all I want to say this. It has been on my mind to say it for a decade, and there's nothing like getting things off your chest. I am convinced that if the Government of the day had agreed that the South Bank Exhibition should be continued through a second summer, into 1952, the public impact of things perceived and felt there would have been much greater and more lasting than was possible in one short season (in spite of the fact that more than 8½ million people passed through the turnstiles in those five months). At that time, a continuance was said to be politically inexpedient. Ten years have not lessened my belief that this assessment was bosh. I will say no more. Already I feel a little better.

But in spite of many disappointments, and far too many unrealized hopes, I believe (and all my former chief colleagues with whom I have recently talked about it share my belief) that not only was the enterprise worth the fabulous effort it entailed but also that it has had some permanent creative influences, which are discernible in Britain to-day. The Festival was in any case, of course, responsible for a formidable range of new buildings and restorations which we now enjoy as part of our regular amenities. I will come back to that. But if I were to be asked what was the biggest single quality of the Festival of Britain I would reply that it was a great experiment—the biggest ever made in this country—in co-operation between all the arts and practitioners of the arts, and between artistic bodies and Industry. For the first time we had the Arts Council, the Royal Institute of British Architects, the Council of Industrial Design, the British Film Institute, the Society of Industrial Artists—not to mention the London County Council and a gaggle of Government Departments—working closely together on a united creative project. What is more, over a wide range of the artistic, industrial and social life of the country—at first reluctantly but with increasing identification—the Festival brought a sceptical industrial and commercial opinion into line; so that when the Exhibition opened it did represent most of what was best at that time, in the arts and in industry, in a rare alliance. Has this borne fruit? I see that



[Leonard Taylor, Southall]

*Festival of Britain South Bank exhibition: the Lion and Unicorn Pavilion (left), the Festival Hall and (right foreground) sculpture by Jacob Epstein*

my friend Sir Basil Spence, past President of the R.I.B.A. and one of the leading architects and designers for the Festival, was speaking the other day about the importance—and the opportunities—of collaboration between architecture and the artist. That ten years after we tried to set the example this appeal should still be so sharply needed points to at least a partial failure.

On the South Bank we did attempt a blending of architecture and the other visual arts in a single harmonious pattern—whatever may be thought to-day of its quality or style—to show how each can serve and supplement the other. We could all wish that this experiment had been better consolidated. But perhaps some seeds were sown. Perhaps the slow but discernible evidences of greater interest by industry, and even here and there by local authorities, in bringing the artist and architect together, and in commissioning large works of art, owes something to what was learnt or subconsciously digested during the Festival. There is also this to be said: the Festival gave a big chance to quite a large number of young architects and designers who have since made good and whose talent has since been adding distinction and liveliness to the British scene.

When Princess Elizabeth, now The Queen, addressed the first meeting of the Festival Council in 1948, she stressed the importance at the time of concentrating on quality; on 'quality in things of the mind no less than in what our factories produce'. With this directive in mind we aimed to set a new standard in the



[Leonard Taylor, Southall

*South Bank exhibition: general scene showing the Dome of Discovery (centre) the Skylon (right) and the main Fairway*

techniques of exhibition display. (Let us never forget, by the way, to honour the gallant pioneering job of the organizers of the 'Britain Can Make It' Exhibition in the austerity days of 1946. We went forward from there.) The South Bank Exhibition was designed, of course, to tell a story, not only to exhibit manufactures. It was also designed so that the organizers, not the exhibitors, should be arbiters of what was to be shown and of the methods of display. No space was for sale, no industry or firm had control over what went in or was left out. Merit was the first consideration. Goods were on display where they fitted into the story of Britain rather than into the story of a particular firm or industry. There was to be no Taj Mahal of Textiles or Parthenon of Pottery. There were no effigies of Winston Churchill in Swiss Roll, and the request by a firm of paper makers to exhibit a model of the South Bank made out of toilet paper had to be regretfully declined. This selective method of exhibiting took some 'selling' at the time. Has it had any effect? This specialized kind of exhibition cannot in any case be regularly repeated, but where can we find traces of its influence to-day, and can we claim that standards of British Exhibition display have been noticeably improved? Exhibition designers who learned something in 1951 have had too few opportunities since to put their ideas into general practice; all the same, under whatever influences or impulses, exhibition techniques surely have advanced. One instance that springs to mind is the British Pavilion at Brussels (though the industrial section



*South Bank exhibition: sculpture group 'London Pride' by Frank Dobson, near the main entrance to the Festival Hall*

fell back into chaotic old ways), and others will occur to you. But by and large British exhibition technique has not sustained the advance that might have been hoped for, nor as an industrial nation have we become as exhibition-minded as I believe it would be to our advantage to be. In this matter the Board of Trade is unhappily excused or fortified in its complacency by the failure of industrialists to agree among themselves.

On the salesmanship side, the purpose of the South Bank Exhibition was to foster exports by showing goods of top quality in design and manufacture and to impress visitors with the inventiveness of our display techniques. The organization which had to be set up to put on show 10,000 and more individual exhibits—in itself something of a marvel of improvisation—is one of the things we can firmly point to to-day as an initiative that has borne continuing fruit.

The Council of Industrial Design, in co-operation with manufacturers and trade associations, made during 1949-50 a detailed survey of the whole range of current British production. Manufacturers were invited to send in details and photographs of their best products. Out of this was built up what became known as the 1951 Stock List. In this Stock List were catalogued not only the more than 10,000 separate manufactured items actually put on exhibition but some 20,000 more. This codified List was available to trade inquirers in a special section of the South Bank, under a staff of trained information officers, known as 'Design Review'. This enterprise was the direct ancestor of the design review service carried on

to-day with great success by the Council of Industrial Design. I believe, in fact, the Council would agree that the prestige and stimulus given to it by the Festival touched off big advances in its influence and progress since. The Festival was in a real sense the begetter of the Design Centre in the Haymarket. Sir Gordon Russell, at that time Director-General, and I tried hard in the period leading up to the Festival to get the Board of Trade to agree to the creation of a temporary Design Centre in a part of the Victoria and Albert Museum. Sir Leigh Ashton, the then Director, was willing and co-operative, but it was not to be; the site was available, but not, we were told, the steel. But in 1952, when the Festival was over, and the possibilities of Design Review had been made apparent, Gordon Russell and I went to see the new Minister, and out of this ultimately emerged the present Haymarket establishment.

At this point Mr. Paul Reilly, the present Director of the Council, or someone else from that organization, should take over from me to discuss what influences the Exhibition had on the design of manufactured goods, for they could obviously speak with much more authority than I. One may perhaps believe that all the emphasis placed by the careful choice of exhibits and the compiling of the Stock List did something to awaken manufacturers to the value of research in design, and to the advantage of bringing in the industrial artist to co-operate in the design of goods. But the credit here is truly the Council of Industrial Design's and is one of the chief purposes for which it was founded and in which it is all the time making successful headway.

Where the designs of larger industrial products are concerned, I think no one could claim that the influence of the Festival has been in any way marked. Take Transport as an example. The 'Comet' aircraft was already with us; nothing very distinguished has marked the last ten years of British motor-car design; and no one I fear could reasonably claim that British Railway design has notably leapt ahead. Nor, I think, would the building profession or architects claim that the Festival has had much continuing influence in the field of building methods. Where then can we turn for traces? As we look around I think we may find quite a few. In manufactured goods we should probably look in the direction of the light industries—to furniture, textiles, lighting equipment, tableware, and such things. In these departments, anyway, British design has been improving and perhaps the Festival was a stimulus. Particular attention was given in the planning of the South Bank to the importance of detail—detail of all sorts: to such things as lettering on captions and on sign posts, to interior and exterior furniture, to electrical fittings, litter bins, details of landscaping, the texture and colour of paving; and, above all, to lighting, interior and exterior. I feel pretty sure that all this meticulous attention to detail did, in its total effect, stimulate a new public awareness of, as well as a commercial interest in, the advantages of cheerful and efficient surroundings. It went a small way towards Sir William Holford's aim of getting people 'to *participate* in the adventure of building'. The results are to be seen to-day in all sorts of ways—not all of them good. A few pictures I shall show you will I think suggest the direct line of descent from South Bank to 1961.



[Design Research Unit

*South Bank exhibition: the Regatta Restaurant  
seen from the podium of the Dome of Discovery*

Let us have a look at some of them. In spite of the shameful mess and muddle still prevailing in our urban scene, I think the Festival has had some influence on the design and use of street furniture, and also on the lay-out and landscaping of intimate urban vistas. It forced a retreat from the third-rate 'rockery' style which was threatening to turn the metropolitan scene into a suburban front garden. Those large concrete flower bowls which were one of the most successful designs of street furniture for the South Bank are now in use up and down the country, often to great advantage—though here again not always. (The L.C.C. has for years been using them in a most regrettable way. The silver birch is a forest tree: whoever expects it to look natural or comfortable in a flower-pot?)

The influence of the Festival on both official and commercial minds was soon afterwards shown at the Coronation, in the stylishness of the decorations and in the choice of those invited to design them. There was a marked improvement. I am not myself an unqualified admirer of the Christmas decorations in Regent Street and Oxford Street, but the best of these in recent seasons have been gay and clever and the fact that they exist at all perhaps owes something to the stimulus of 1951. Again, the brilliantly successful facelifting operation in Magdalen Street, Norwich, instigated by the Civic Trust (and soon, I hope, to be tried in other

cities) probably owes something to the initial spur of the Festival—as does possibly even the existence of the Civic Trust itself? As I have already said, the South Bank organizers paid particular attention to illuminations, even inviting a damned foreigner—to the disgust of several people at the time—to come over and advise us. The Ministry of Works also took great pains that year to improve and extend the floodlighting of public buildings. In the event, the illuminations of London were one of the major successes of the Festival, and I believe this success has had its effect throughout the country ever since. Another thing we did was to make strong use of primary colours to enliven buildings and landscape. In this bold use of colour, in the marriage of architecture and sculpture, in scrupulous use of landscaping, in attention to elegance and finish in interior and exterior fittings, new standards and a new style were set up—the 'Festival Style'—which evidently caught the imagination of other designers and also created a public or commercial *demand*. It was copied all over the country—copied, and gradually debased. In due course the Festival Style became a cliché. Probably this was inevitable. Buildings, fittings, décor deliberately designed for an Exhibition may take liberties—ought to take liberties—which are not necessarily suitable for permanent use without modification. More important, when a style is imitated by inferior craftsmen and introduced in unsuitable surroundings it can soon begin to acquire a meretricious look. You can't wear a buttonhole at a funeral and expect to look well dressed. God preserve us always from the right thing in the wrong place.

The Festival fashion in interior design was to be seen at its best at such places as airports and terminals, some hotels and travel bureaux, and in many posh executive suites; and at its worst in all those sad little coffee bars, and above all in that wholesale face-lifting which in the past decade has transformed the interior of the English pub into something that doesn't look like a pub at all (and certainly not like the South Bank either). All the same, the general influence was good; the trouble is that the style has remained static. That is the fault not of the Festival designers but of their successors. In 1951 a general face-lift, and a general heart-lift, were both overdue and the Festival gave us both. The standards of what I may call public design are higher to-day than ten years ago—higher, and I think gayer. The Festival did hit people in the eye, which is the right objective whether you are a pugilist or a planner. Look around to-day at such things as shop facias, office interiors; look at the landscaping of public buildings; look at the development of pedestrian precincts and the resourceful exploitation of variations in level. It is permissible to believe that the South Bank Exhibition had an influence in these things. In general there is a bit more elegance about, though still a shameful amount of sheer mediocrity and downright bad planning. It would be pretentious, of course, to claim that this or that advance was categorically due to the Festival. There have been many creative influences at work, national and especially international: one may believe that the Festival was one of them.

Finally, let me remind you that the Festival itself brought into existence a respectable number of permanent new buildings, not to mention several pieces of first-rate sculpture, some fine paintings and a number of musical compositions which are now part of the national repertoire. To start off with, there is the South

Bank itself—now at long last to be fully re-developed—with its four acres of new embankment reclaimed from the Thames mud. There is the Festival Hall, there is the National Film Theatre, there are the extensive pleasure gardens and the popular fun-fair in Battersea Park. There is the Memorial Garden next to St. Paul's—a permanent addition to the City's meagre public spaces, and filled to capacity every lunch hour. There is the re-planned Parliament Square and the street developments at the southern ends of Westminster and Waterloo bridges. More important, there is the Lansbury 'neighbourhood' scheme in Poplar, which owes its existence to the Festival and much of which was planned and built in time for it. In many provincial towns, buildings were reconstructed under the impetus of the Festival year—among them the Free Trade Hall at Manchester (home of the Hallé Orchestra), the lovely Assembly Rooms at York and at Norwich, the restoration of Buckland Abbey, Plymouth, and of the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool. There would have been much more, but in those days Austerity was still with us and public building was severely rationed. Up and down Britain more than 2,000 towns and villages did something to mark the Festival Year, and many of these things have made some permanent improvement or added some new amenity to the local scene. Yes, in spite of many disappointments, and many failures, both public and private, to 'follow-through', the Festival of Britain was a worth while adventure and left Britain a little brighter and better off in several ways than it was before the whole thing began.

#### DISCUSSION

THE CHAIRMAN: It is not always wise to visit again years later a place—to repeat a tour which was unusually successful and of which one retains unusually happy memories. On this occasion it was undoubtedly wise. My own feeling is that while one must agree that it is impossible to get out a balance sheet which would convince an accountant, I feel that Sir Gerald was modest in his assessment of the amount of permanent good that the Festival left. You have your own views. There is a little time left before the meeting finishes and Sir Gerald has very kindly undertaken to discuss any points you like to raise.

While you formulate anything that you may like to say, I should like to offer Sir Gerald one crumb of consolation about that decision which I am sure he so rightly described as bosh—not to continue the South Bank Exhibition for a second year. It would have been a consolation for him, I am sure, if he could have heard the sighs of relief that went up in the offices of architects and designers who had taken a good deal of trouble in their attempt to put up buildings and displays which would be weather-proof and gay for one spring and summer and autumn, and would then conveniently collapse like a pack of cards and so save the expense of pulling them down. I think that if the reverse decision had been made there would have been a good deal of anxiety in the way of looking to *ad hoc* methods of joining glass to window frames and anchoring roofs to walls.

MR. GEORGE HIM: To me the most important thing about the Festival was the spirit of excitement in the whole country, both among the public and the creative people, and for this we have to be grateful to Sir Gerald. The bane of this country is smugness and complacency. There was in the Festival, in the Lion and Unicorn Pavillion, a piece of sculpture which ought to have been rescued and placed right in front of the Royal Society of Arts: it represented Alice's White Knight with a

velvet glove, patting him without interruption on his back. We are getting smug again. The effect of the Festival has by now worn off. The two fundamental styles of its presentation, the 'atomic-modern' of the South Bank and the 'neo-Victorian Baroque' of Battersea Park have been repeated *ad nauseam* ever since. We need a fresh wind again. We need more Festivals. What I should like to ask Sir Gerald is this: when is he going to do the next one?

THE LECTURER: One festival in a lifetime! Nevertheless, somebody else might begin to consider whether it is not time to do something of the same sort again.

BRIGADIER J. L. P. MACNAIR: We have all remembered with delight the pleasure we had in 1951 and I think we can all agree with Sir Gerald that a good deal of that pleasure still goes on before our eyes.

I have just one little sadness about it, and that is that so many of the buildings that are going up now, obviously deriving inspiration from the Festival itself and from the kind of spirit which animated the Festival—one of lightness and gaiety—are of straight lines. Now the Festival buildings did not confine themselves to straight lines. The Dome of Discovery was curved and the riverside restaurant had nice wavy roofs. We had different lines all over the place, but what the modern architect seems to have concentrated on is straight lines. One of the most successful buildings in the whole thing was the riverside theatre in Battersea Park. I think it was James Gardner who designed it. That was a perfectly lovely building, and you think of that and at the same time think of two other new theatres, quite successful, but rigid and somewhat cold. One I am thinking of is the outside view of the Mermaid Theatre. The auditorium and stage have been simply and skilfully contrived from the old Puddle Dock—satisfactorily relaxed—but the foyer and outside front are all airy and glass, in rigid straight lines. Another theatre, the Columbia, also reflects the Festival, but again how much more fun it would have been if something like the Riverside theatre had occurred in Shaftesbury Avenue. About our new office blocks, of the boot-box school of architecture, probably the least said the better.

MR. JACK GODFREY-GILBERT: I should like to ask Sir Gerald if he would kindly remind me how it was that the Lansbury site was chosen for the exhibition of live architecture, town planning and building research, bearing in mind the difficulties which must have been overcome with the various departments of the London County Council, the Valuer, the Architectural Department and others? How was it possible to have that beautiful site for this exhibition which was linked so cleverly to the South Bank by the river 'bus? How is it that such a brilliant idea was put forward, when it could have ended up in some prefabricated pavilion attached to the South Bank?

THE LECTURER: What I remember is that we said to ourselves, it is no good having an architecture exhibition consisting of a lot of plans and photographs which the public would not understand. First of all, we thought of models, and then we said, why not build the actual houses and display building techniques in process of being used? We got the co-operation of the L.C.C. and of the Ministry of Works and we went forward from there.

THE CHAIRMAN: I wonder if Sir Hugh Casson would like to add anything to what Sir Gerald said about this.

SIR HUGH CASSON: What Sir Gerald said is absolutely correct; we had this idea in the Festival office of a 'live' architecture exhibition. We went to the L.C.C. to discover whether there were any suitable sites on the verge of development and which could be perhaps brought forward. And that is how Lansbury was selected. Incidentally, the River 'Bus service, devised to serve this exhibition, was in itself a Festival contribution to London.

I think that one of our failures was the poor old National Theatre, the foundation stone of which was laid on the South Bank in 1951 and since then has been on castors

and wheeled about London. I do hope that one day this particular building will actually be seen. I should like here to pay a tribute to Sir Gerald for the enormous fun which we had working under his leadership ten years ago.

What would the Festival be like if it was done now? Coming out of a very austere post-war period the pendulum naturally swung us towards a rather gay, ephemeral, frail, elegant form of architecture. Now the pendulum has swung back in favour of architecture that is tough and brutal and strong, and depends very much on natural strong materials like brick and concrete. How, I wonder, would the bright young boys of to-day (which we thought ourselves to be ten years ago) use these materials and this idiom to build another South Bank exhibition in 1961?

MRS. MARY ADAMS (a Member of Council of the Society): I should like to thank Sir Gerald warmly for his evocation of those glorious days of 1951 and to remark that in my opinion women were pleased with an exhibition the design of which seemed to be essentially feminine. It was gay and sophisticated and influential—all the things women like to think they are; I should regret it if the gloomy ideas described were to come about and exhibition design became heavier in future. Women would not be behind that!

One other thing: Sir Gerald was able to show that advertising could be controlled. Does he think there has been any progress in control since then?

THE LECTURER: I think the answer to Mary Adams is that we controlled advertising on the South Bank by eliminating it. There was plenty round the outside and there was an advertising competition, you may remember, organized in connection with the Festival, for the best posters, and all along York Road these were displayed under flood lighting. I think that what we did do was to impose a style of lettering which was used throughout the whole site and which added a great feeling of unity and order. I have not seen signs of any restriction of advertising in other exhibitions since. I recently went out to see the site of the new World Fair in New York with the organizer of it, and I am afraid that some of Sir Hugh's worst thoughts about building, and some of Mary Adams' about advertising, are likely to rear their heads there. But I think it is possible that design and advertising as a whole have very considerably improved in the last few years. I am not thinking of poster advertising now, but of advertising in the newspapers. I think a different class of advertiser has come into the field, the prestige advertiser, who employs first-rate typographers, layout men, designers, and so on to draw up his advertisements, and nowadays the prestige advertisements, in the quality newspapers, are really a pleasure to look at and the eye slides on to them.

MRS. ADAMS: I might just remind Sir Gerald that there is Commercial Television advertising nowadays.

MR. PETER E. M. SHARP: I think Sir Gerald has summed up the achievement of 1951 very well; but I think he omitted to mention three exhibitions which he should for the sake of the record have included: they are Kelvin Hall and the two travelling exhibitions.

THE LECTURER: Very fair indeed. I was conscious of the fact that I had concentrated on the South Bank because it was there that the style was really exemplified. Kelvin Hall was a very interesting exhibition indeed; Basil Spence did a fascinating job. The travelling exhibitions also provided challenging answers to two diverse and difficult problems. We must also not forget (since we are going to mention them all) the Science exhibition at the new wing of the Science Museum at South Kensington or the Book exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

MR. RICHARD BARTLE: May I suggest that the greatest influence of the Festival came from the scale of opportunity given so wonderfully to architects, designers, engineers and craftsmen, rather than the influence of style? This sense of scale which a lot of designers and architects still hold within them is possibly the most precious thing

that came out of the Festival. Many of us have never been able to do anything quite like it since, from the design point of view anyway; for architects I cannot speak.

MR. ERIC LUCKING: I gather there is a feeling that one Festival was enjoyable, but that the second one would not be exactly a frolic. I should nevertheless like to back George Him's plea for another one, on the same scale, which would put everybody on their toes.

MR. GODFREY-GILBERT: Could we not have something on the lines of the Triennale in Milan, a group of permanent buildings on the site of the National Theatre (of which the foundation stone has become a memorial stone)? Could we not start a group of permanent buildings in which we could have annual exhibitions of the best products of this country? I feel that we do lack something of that kind where people from abroad can see what we are now producing.

THE LECTURER: A very interesting suggestion. There is, of course, the Design Centre, you must not forget that. There are about to be erected on the South Bank, to be ready by 1964, two new permanent buildings, one a conference hall and the other a new exhibition gallery, and possibly one or both of those buildings could be used for the purposes you have in mind.

MR. ALEC DAVIS: May I suggest that one of the things for which Sir Gerald and his Festival colleagues might take credit is the fact that whereas before the war when motoring on the average English road, you had no idea of the name of the village you were in, as a result of the name signs introduced in the Festival practically every English village on the main roads does now state its identity. This undoubtedly helps the increasing flow of overseas tourists who come to this country.

SIR GORDON RUSSELL: At the Council of Industrial Design I had something to do with the problem of trying to raise standards, and I know that in 99.9 per cent of cases the designer is trying to get across to the client what he would hope to do. I think the greatest thing about the Festival of Britain was the fact that Sir Gerald was spurring on the designers to do exactly what they wanted to do, which is a thing so exceptional that it ought to be emphasized. The value of the knowledgeable and sympathetic patron is beyond price.

THE CHAIRMAN: I feel bound to refer again to the point which has been made, by George Him originally and Sir Hugh Casson and others. It is evident that there is a very solid body of opinion that we ought to try it again in some form. I do not now feel there is much left to speculate on on the question of what the architecture would look like, because Sir Hugh, in outlining the architect's difficulties, seemed to me to describe Wembley Stadium so exactly that that is more or less settled; but it would of course be fascinating to find out what form all the other components of such an enterprise might take next time. One is also bound to agree that among the most solid benefits (not everlasting but lasting for quite a time) is this tremendous encouragement to extra effort that this sort of imaginative enterprise gives to those who are trying to do their best, not in isolation but with a whole lot of other people working towards a very exciting common goal. I think the moral benefit to us all from partaking in it lasted for quite a time. I do not think it lasted for quite ten years and I should agree that ten years is a reasonable length of time to leave it before something of the sort is tried again.

I pointed out that Sir Gerald is a man of many parts. He can leave one and go to another quite easily. I think he could just as easily leave others and return for a while to the one, and I leave him with that thought and invite you to express what I am sure you will agree with me has been your great enjoyment of a fascinating afternoon and a most enjoyable lecture.

*The vote of thanks to the Lecturer was carried with acclamation, and the meeting then ended.*

# GEOGRAPHY AND THE BUSINESS WORLD TO-DAY

*A paper by*

*THE RT. HONBLE. LORD NATHAN, P.C., T.D., F.B.A.,*

*President, Royal Geographical Society, and a Member of  
Council, Royal Society of Arts, read to the Society on  
Wednesday, 22nd February, 1961, with Oswald P. Milne,  
F.R.I.B.A., J.P., Chairman of Council of the Society,  
in the Chair*

THE CHAIRMAN: For two reasons I am sure this paper is going to be interesting. Lord Nathan is a business man of very wide experience, and he has also, for three exciting years, been President of the Royal Geographical Society. (He is also a Member of the Council of this Society.) I suppose everybody in this room is interested in some of the many aspects of geography. You may look upon it as a science that reveals to us the wonders and variety of our natural world, that introduces to us the immense beauties and strangenesses of the physical world around us, or you may be interested in the effect that it has produced on the character and ways of life of people in various parts of the world.

Taking the geography of this country alone, I think a good many of us are interested to think what the earlier settlers in these islands made of the physical things they found around them, the sea right round the island, the coastline, the sheltered harbours, the rivers, the hills and the valleys, and so forth; the way in which they began to settle it has probably to a large extent governed the pattern of our living to-day. We cannot fail to recognize that these early settlers had an intuitive geographical sense in the siting of their towns, their ports and their communications, to say nothing of their skill in placing their castles, their great churches and their important dwellings. I am sure you will agree that in these later days, when all our problems are much more urgent and complex, we must make every use of the geographer who, with his specialized knowledge, can help in dealing with the planning of our world-wide affairs.

*The following paper was then read.*

## THE PAPER

My rôle this evening is something of a dual one. On the one hand, in one capacity and another I have been closely entangled and involved with the world of business during the past half-century. On the other hand I have, first as President of the Geographical Association and now—for the last three years—as President of the Royal Geographical Society, been engaged a good deal in the affairs and in the thinking of geographers. I say this because it goes some way to explain the title which I have chosen for my lecture—‘Geography and the Business World To-day’.

As to its content, here too I think a word of explanation is desirable. I have used the phrase ‘Business World’, but I am not here primarily concerned with the world of business. This is not a calculated paradox. The world of business has to do with

the immediate processes of buying and selling, of commerce, of trade. The 'Business World' I interpret as the world we all inhabit and all share. None of us, whatever his calling wherever he may be, is excluded from it. The age of self-sufficiency has gone. We are all—individuals and nations—interdependent and inter-related. And the life and welfare of all communities is dependent on a proper balance of trade.

It is in connection with this relationship that I am advancing a plea for an increased recognition of the part that the geographer must play in this 'Business World' of ours. Not only as a remote specialist providing us with answers to set problems but as one whose thinking will pervade our own.

We are all urged to adjust our minds to a scientific outlook. It is just as vital to adjust our sights to a shrinking world.

Commerce derives from geographical variety over the earth and from man's desire and capacity to multiply his resources. It is urgent to our economic salvation that we should retain a world-wide outlook, and boards of directors, executives of industry and commerce should be capable of thinking globally and of appreciating the conditions of other countries.

Nearly all great concerns, and many smaller ones too, maintain economic information bureaux. But it is not enough that these should be there to provide specific information on demand. It is essential that those who make top-level decisions should be aware of the broad principles of geography. Without this knowledge, not only are imaginative developments stifled but serious and costly errors are made in large-scale projects. It is easy to think of examples of these in recent times. Ignorance of such factors has had disastrous effects on vast tracts of country whereby the natural heritage of man has in the interests of immediate needs been squandered for a dust bowl.

I do not pretend to define 'Geography'. Molière's *Bourgeois gentilhomme* was astonished to learn that he had been speaking prose all his life. In some respects, geography is rather like that. But to propound an acceptable definition is a formidable task even for those who are, unlike myself, professional geographers. My association with geography by virtue of office has, however, taught me something of the very great changes that have taken place in the conception of geography since my own schooldays. Life was simpler then; in the words of E. C. Bentley: geography was about maps, biography about chaps. For years, for centuries, indeed since classical times, geography was almost exclusively descriptive. It consisted of the collection of facts about countries and peoples. I do not underrate the value of such facts. To the business man it is significant and should be suggestive that 57 per cent of the world's total population lives in Asia. It is significant that 76 per cent of the world's total industrial production is concentrated in North America and Europe, excluding the U.S.S.R. It is no less significant—in a decreasingly agricultural and an increasingly industrial world—that 74 per cent of the world's population employed in agriculture live in Africa. These are illuminating facts, not least to those in commerce and industry, and those who are concerned with the broad strategy of our economic development.

But behind such facts are still more important facts, or rather factors. These

are the factors of physical environment. It is the awareness of these factors that mainly differentiates geography of to-day from that of my schooldays and which has led Professor Dudley Stamp to dub it 'causal geography'—a bad term, he admits, since it can too easily be misconstrued as *casual* geography!

I do not go so far as some geopoliticians in thinking that environmental factors are always predominant in shaping the future of nations. This is a form of determinism abhorrent to the free man. For man has free will and varying abilities. In some cases environment is bent to his will; in others he succumbs to the force of environment. There is much to be said for the *dictum* of the great British geographer Sir Halford Mackinder on this. 'The mind', he said, 'which has effectively grasped in their true relations, the factors of environment, is likely to be fertile in the suggestion of new relations between the environment and man.' It is precisely in this context of a study of relationships, and in particular of the study of the relationship between environment and man that geographers have their special contribution to make to the thought of the twentieth century.

How does this concept of the rôle of the geographer fit in with modern geographical training and with the requirements and the needs of commerce and industry? One obvious way is in the wide range of knowledge which the geographer must possess in the fields of both science and the humanities. Indeed the fact that he is trained to cover such a gap is in itself a most valuable asset in the modern world. History and ethnology, geology and climatology, economic output and economic potential are all grist to his mill. And no doubt it is because of his special knowledge in several of these fields that to-day he finds employment in industry and commerce—in the oil and aluminium industries, in the export trade and market research and in shipping and airways, to take only a few examples.

But more important in the complex world of business to-day is the feeling that by his training the geographer has acquired the habit of looking at problems in their all-round relations. The trained geographer is accustomed to analyse a landscape from the point of view of many branches of knowledge, and to approach problems from many different directions. Just as a geographer should be able to synthesize all the different elements of a landscape, so he is trained to balance all the factors in a problem and see it whole.

It is this synoptic view of the geographer which is the heart of the matter. It is fundamental and vital to the effective planning of all commercial and industrial development. I saw and heard of some very striking examples of this during a recent visit to Poland, where I was the guest of the Polish Academy of Sciences. For those who have not seen it with their own eyes it is difficult to imagine the devastation wrought in Poland during the War. Whole regions were wiped out. The economic basis of the country was destroyed. Then, with the Peace, came new problems. Frontiers were changed. Territories were gained but others were lost. In the West there was an almost total evacuation of the population. In the East, lost territory produced a great influx of refugees. On top of all this, new economic policies were in force. A largely agricultural country, primitive in many technical respects, had to be converted to one where, under the new régime, industrial

expansion was the key-word. Confronted by this national metamorphosis, Polish planners had to start virtually from scratch.

All this called not only for a fresh appraisal of national resources, but for geographical appreciations covering all the different economic regions of Poland. In all these surveys Polish geographers played a vital rôle. The history of the part they played interested me very much. It gave me some idea of the contribution which British geographers might make in the planning of economic development both of this country and of Commonwealth territories. As early as 1945 there were already thirty geographers in Poland engaged in providing surveys and appreciations for the commercial and industrial expansion called for by the new régime. Nine of these were members of the highest planning authority, the Central Physical Planning Board. Population and settlement problems, communications, a wide variety of economic questions were all subjects for review by geographers. The real test for geographers, however, came four years later when Poland's Six Year Plan began. It was then that planned geographical investigations assumed a national scale.

In 1953 the Geographical Institute of the Academy of Sciences in Poland took over all these initial geographical investigations. There was no doubt about the purpose of this great centralized geographical effort. The appreciations and surveys had one object only in view. This was to provide the data for the promotion of the social and economic development of Poland and of its different regions and geographical units, and copies of all these studies were sent to the relevant planning authorities. One of the most important projects, of interest to us especially because it was based on a British model, was the Land Utilization Survey of Poland which was started in 1946. First of all, a series of geomorphological maps was prepared, the object being to apply the results of a detailed study of land-forms to the needs of agriculture. But this detailed study of land-forms had much wider uses than that. It provided a basis for the planning of new settlements and communications. It provided a basis for the regionalization of agriculture. And it provided a ground plan for the allocation and expansion of Polish industry, which the Government demanded.

The next task was the problem of water resources. This was an urgent one—as indeed, to a lesser extent, it is in Great Britain to-day—because of the need for rapid urban and industrial expansion. Polish geographers were set to work at once on the preparation of a series of hydrographic maps. These were designed to show the availability of water throughout the country in the context of a changing economic environment. They, and the land-form maps, have been the basic documents for the regional planners of the new Poland.

One of the major features of the Polish Six Year Plan—it was an inevitable accompaniment of the general programme of industrial expansion—was the rapid development of urban centres. The urban population of the country in fact increased by three millions in the six years between 1949 and 1955, and the proportion of the population employed in industry rose by over a million in these same years. Such a shift in population called for a whole series of detailed studies of environment and physiography from the Polish geographers, as well as studies of urban

functions. These provided the basis for the development of urban networks, of new conurbations and of existing towns.

One particularly interesting branch of research was the investigation of local climate. The geographer's first task was to establish criteria for the regional mapping of climate. This was done under three heads: agricultural areas, industrialized urban areas and health resorts. The expansion of the different health resorts will, of course, depend on the results of this investigation of local climate. During my all too short stay in Poland, I spent several days in the heart and centre of industrial Poland, the Upper Silesian Industrial District. It is Poland's most important economic region, and I was interested to find that the Chairman of the Committee charged with the planning of its development was a geographer!

The problems confronting the geographical planners in Poland are, of course, because of war losses and post-war policies, necessarily on an exaggerated scale. But they are far from being unique. Consider the difficulties and dilemmas of increasing urbanization. This is a world phenomenon. You can see the same thing happening in North America and in the Soviet Union. You can see it in Germany, in Japan, in France. You can see it in this country. It is startlingly evident in its global context when one lists the number of cities in the world comprising over one million inhabitants. These increased from thirty-four cities in 1940 to sixty-four in 1953. The number is still growing and the major cause for it is to be seen in increasing industrialization, with a consequent concentration of population. Increased population means a demand for additional recreational and social facilities; amenities which themselves add further pressure on the towns. Yet another cause of urban drift is the attraction of expanding markets, particularly for consumer goods. These are all factors which urban planners, geographers among them, have to take into account in a growing number of countries to-day.

Have we in this country anything to learn from Poland in the use of geographers for the planned development of commerce and industry? A fundamental difference between the political systems of the two countries prevents, of course, any exact application of Poland's methods. In this country, the word 'Planning' has—illogically, in my view—come to have a disagreeable connotation. For reasons which often have little to do with economics, it gives rise to strong, if not violent, reactions to any idea of a planned economy, however much that may seem in the end inevitable in the circumstances of the modern commercial and industrial world. The result is that we have no overall planning organization looking, in long terms, at the future strategic development of our economy. It is true that in our Ministry of Housing and Local Government we have research staffs, which include a number of geographers, who are engaged in compiling geographical data of all kinds. The fruits of their labours can be seen in the excellent maps which the Ministry produces, covering resources, communications, the distribution of population, climate, the use of land, and so on. But these are produced only at fairly long intervals of time; such surveys should be a continuous process. There is an urgent need for a revision of the Land Utilization Maps of Great Britain, an invaluable project, originally organized and administered by Professor Dudley Stamp. That was and in some respects still is, an essential aid to planning the use

of our very limited amount of land. That it is now to be revised is due, not to any Government initiative, but to the private efforts of a group of individuals led by Miss Alice Coleman of the University of London.

Great changes affecting the commercial and industrial life of this country are taking place in our economy. New towns are springing up. There are changes in the location of industry. There are significant shifts and movements in the distribution of our population. New sources of power are being harnessed. A new network of trunk roads is beginning to spread across the map, raising enigmatic questions of the future of our national railways which occupy so much badly needed land. And over all looms a new and challenging phenomenon which we must recognize and meet: a challenge which comes from without in the form of increasing industrialization not only in older countries but also from a growing number of new ones. All these changes need to be watched and balanced one against the other in the broad interests of our future economic prosperity. The data about them must be collected and mapped, and constantly revised so that we have always ready to hand the facts upon which to base our appreciation of what lies ahead. In Poland the task is allotted to the national geographical organizations such as the Geographical Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences; and it is a continuous process. In Great Britain much valuable work is no doubt done by the relatively small geographical staffs of one or two ministries, notably the Ministry of Housing and Local Government—preoccupied as these busy officials are by the pressure of day-to-day affairs. For the rest, it is left to the un-coordinated initiative and labour of a few private planning or geographical organizations. What is the result of this unsatisfactory situation? To those acquainted with our economic planning needs, that is plain to see. In the absence of such basic geographical data, urgent questions affecting the future of commerce and industry, especially those concerning the conservation of resources and the balanced use of land, remain unanswered.

I have always felt that in a country like ours a great deal of this basic geographical research, so essential to the planned development of our commerce and industry, could be done through a concerted effort by the geographical departments of our universities. Since the turn of the nineteenth century when schools of geography were founded at Oxford and Cambridge through the initiative of the Royal Geographical Society, these university departments have increased in number. There are now no universities in this country and only one or two university colleges, which do not have geographical departments. I think that some ideas of this kind must have been stirring in the minds of the members of Lord Hailsham's Advisory Council on Scientific Policy when they drafted their enlightened and forward-looking Annual Report and Review, published in October last year, and debated in the House of Lords early in November. In that report the Council pointed out that there was a significant absence of basic research in the scientific assessment of such major problems as the conservation and long-term utilization of our water supplies. Indeed, if there was ever a case for national surveys and planning, it lies in this field of water supplies upon which new industrial calls are increasingly being made. The Council also pointed out that much remains

to be done towards a scientific classification of land capability. This, they declared, called for comprehensive geographical and topographical investigations on a national scale. They pointed out, too, that there is a great need for the study of the effect of long-term climatic changes in conserving natural resources. And they went beyond the United Kingdom in emphasizing the need for research in tropical ecology. This was essential if the planning and execution of development schemes for under-developed countries was to be carried out more economically. The prospects of new markets springing up in such countries is naturally very much to the forefront of the minds of those in the world of business!

In this country, unlike Poland of course, we do not direct. We can only invite our universities to undertake research in applied geography of this nature. If they accept, then we must also ensure that their geographical departments are adequately provided for, with research equipment and research staffs. The newly established Research Committee in the Royal Geographical Society, under the chairmanship of an eminent geographical planner and one of our Vice-Presidents, Professor L. Dudley Stamp, is about to study the whole question of research in applied geography from the standpoint of national needs. They will approach it from two points of view. On the one hand, they must first discover the facts about the research potential in the geographical departments of our universities as they are constituted to-day. Their next task will be to ascertain just what are the needs of the national planners, and to discover it in terms of specific and urgent questions to answer which certain geographical data are required. In this way we of the Royal Geographical Society hope to serve as both a link and a clearing-house for the universities as well as for Government departments concerned with planning and, of course, for commerce and industry. I do not think that the university departments, if they are willing to co-operate, should restrict their contribution only to the collection of basic facts. I think they should also be invited to prepare, on the Polish model, broad geographical appreciations concerning the balanced use of our limited amount of land.

Ways in which land can be most economically used in this country is a matter on which it is most difficult to obtain an objective, national view. Competition for land is intense. New land is required for new or expanding industry. It is required for new residential areas to meet the needs of new distributions of population and much else. In so far as land is required for new residential areas, it involves new areas of demand for consumer goods. All these needs have to be reviewed and balanced one against the other in the interests of the commercial and industrial economy, and the welfare of the community as a whole.

I should like to say just a word on a field of endeavour which touches increasingly on both commerce and industry; that is the field of technology. In this aspect of the problem, I take a special interest as you will understand when I recall that the last occasion on which I spoke from this platform was in my capacity of President of the Association of Technical Institutions. Technologists are now deeply immersed in the problems of commerce and industry, and it seems to me all the more important that they should be familiar with the

geographical framework within which this work is conducted. Some aspects of geography are directly relevant to the specialized studies of technologists. In the engineering and textile industries, for example, students of technology will not be slow to see the relevance of some knowledge of the distribution of raw materials. The location of factories and mills and the distribution of potential markets are no less matters of moment for the technologist. Of even greater importance to him is the geographical faculty of being able to study an industry in its regional setting so that its significance in the general life of the community can be seen. All this calls for the introduction of some geographical training on the part of our increasing output of technologists, as we in the Royal Geographical Society have recently emphasized.

In this brief and generalized survey, I have tried to suggest how the training and synoptic point of view of the geographer can have special advantages to the business world. That applies in particular to the geographer's faculty for perceiving relationships, above all the economic significance of the relationships between environment and the activities of man. This is a faculty which is to some extent induced through the broad range of intellectual interest which the geographer must have, in both science and the humanities. That in itself is surely no bad thing in an age when increasingly narrow specialization prevents too many of us from seeing the wood for the trees. It is certainly no bad thing in an age when one of the foremost educational problems confronting us is to bridge the gap between science and the arts so that we all, students of the humanities though we might be, may be able to understand and to share in the benefits of science as in their application to every walk of life.

I have tried to show, in the course of this paper, that the width of scientific knowledge which is necessary to the geographer makes him valuable in a number of fields to do with business. But my chief aim has been to direct thought to the value, as it seems to me, of the geographer, of geographical training and of geographical techniques in aiding the planning of what I call the 'Business World'. The collection and collation of economic intelligence, the placing and balancing of geographical facts in relation to a particular physical environment—it is here that I think the geographer can best serve the community. Britain is among the leaders of the world in industrial research, both the research of the pure scientist into natural processes and the practical application of the results. The Department of Scientific and Industrial Research is there to foster such efforts with official blessing and encouragement. In the field of pure and applied geography we need an equal awareness and understanding, both private and official, of their importance to our economy. The geographer should be able and allowed to render the service that he can give; geographers in our universities should be encouraged to do so. The economic future of this country and of the under-developed territories overseas is, I am convinced, dependent on the proper planning of their resources. It is in this field of endeavour, in the application of geographical 'intelligence' and of geographical appreciations to the planned development of our economic life that, in my view, the geographer can best render service to what I have termed, rather broadly, perhaps, 'The Business World'.

## DISCUSSION

MR. P. J. NORMAN: I have listened to Lord Nathan with great interest, but I am afraid he has not answered my immediate problem! I am the father of a geographer, and she got quite a good degree in her subject, and so did four of her friends, who formed together a team of five who frequented the coffee-houses of Cambridge. None of them has got a job utilizing her subject. One is doing post-graduate geography in Australia and staving off the evil day for a couple of years, one is doing egyptology, one is in library work, one is in the Civil Service; my own daughter has tried library work, and she has been an information officer for one of the major industries where she was a very highly paid telephonist. In other words none of these five has been able to exploit her subject. My own daughter has fallen back on teaching.

I should like to ask Lord Nathan whether he is satisfied with the rather frightening outlook for geographers at the universities and whether he can suggest any means whereby employers in this country can be persuaded to employ geographers—not because they are graduates, but because they are graduates in geography.

THE LECTURER: I cannot help thinking that the young undergraduates to whom reference has been made must have derived considerable help in the careers they have chosen from the accomplishment of a degree in geography; but if my questioner wishes me to give any information as to how a particular geographer may best place geographical knowledge to good use in employment (whether in industry or commerce) I would reply that one of the purposes of my paper here this evening is to encourage men in business and in commerce to recognize the importance of the geographer and to prepare the ground for such young women as we have heard of from Mr. Norman.

MR. A. POWIS BALE, M.I.MECH.E.: I am an engineer, and it seems to me that our last speaker has met with difficulties because he did not realize that geography is an applied scientific subject and must go hand in hand with others. If we look at the Kariba Dam and the wonderful work recently done by Levers on the West Coast of Africa in the timber industry, we see that the geographer has at many points proved his value to industry, but I don't think he can exist by pure geography. I do not know whether Lord Nathan agrees?

THE LECTURER: I share the view which has just been expressed. Geography is a most valuable adjunct in any professional occupation which involves the study of problems such as those to which I have been referring, and others which arise every day in all parts of the world in connection with commerce and industry, including Levers and the West African interests to which reference has been made.

The Royal Geographical Society amongst other activities provides an Information Service. I dare say a good many of you would be surprised to know that we have a special staff available for answering inquiries from commerce and industry. We get two or three thousand such inquiries each year. A Board of Directors may be meeting, and suddenly they telephone and ask us to send round a map with regard to this or that, because they are considering a particular problem, and wish to know exactly where a place is, or what the communications are, and so on. Others, of course, ask questions which we find very difficult to answer. In one case, for instance, we got an urgent message, can we please locate the point of no return? Another inquirer during the war, having received a telegram marked at the head *sans origine*, telephoned to ask whether we could say exactly where *sans origine* was. People are sent from industrial and commercial concerns every day to the Royal Geographical Society's map room, because they know they can find information more readily available there than anywhere else: the best geographical library, the largest collection of detailed maps in any place outside the British Museum. So there is no doubt that the

geographer is required by commerce and industry, but the suggestion which I have attempted to make this evening is that geographers, whether they are undergraduates male or female, should be used more frequently; there should be a wider opening for them because the need is now beginning to be recognized. Geography is only now coming to be a discipline which has attracted to itself attention and respect. In one sense it is a new subject.

LIEUT.-COL. WALTER E. CROSS, F.R.I.B.A.: I am an architect. I know Lord Nathan of course in his recent capacity as President of the Association of Technical Institutions, and also in that of President of the Royal Geographical Society. I fully agree that there must be a very important place for geographers, and in a very broad scope that will be enacted abroad. But at home, with the complications and the great difficulties of town planning which we have, with various departments conflicting with the views of other departments in the planning and use of land, where the geographer might say a certain situation is ideal for this project, but the town planner will say no, how is the geographer going to reconcile himself with all the many departments so conflicting?

THE LECTURER: It is very hard for any of us to reconcile ourselves to the requirements of town planning. We do our best, and no doubt the geographer will help us to do better. I know that Colonel Cross must have found the Royal Geographical Society useful in its geographical aspect because he has travelled widely in Tibet and India. He has made maps himself, and I have not the least doubt that he will underwrite what I have said with regard to the facilities which can be obtained at the centre of the Royal Geographical Society, and how desirable it would be if those facilities were extended into the very heart of industry and commerce by geographers employed or made available to these organizations. Then perhaps some of the problems of town planning would become more realistic.

DR. L. DUDLEY STAMP: I did not intend to speak, but I feel that I cannot let this occasion pass without expressing thanks on behalf of the professional geographers for the very able way in which Lord Nathan (who has come to us as it were from outside with a very wide experience) has put before this gathering the crucial problems of the geographer and his position in the world.

I stand before you as a Professor of Geography who has never had a lecture in geography, for the simple reason that it was not a subject of Honours standard in our universities at the time when I was at college. So I had to take my training in other subjects, and came into geography because of a very deep conviction that there is an important work to be done in the application of what we now know as geographical principles to world and everyday events. It is a very great joy to me to hear, after these years of struggle, that point of view being vindicated from the lips of one so eloquent and so eminent as our lecturer this evening.

I would say this in reply to questions which have been put: geography is, as you have rightly said, Sir, a point of view, a training which I think the late Field Marshal Smuts would have called a 'holistic' training, which enables one to take a view which is the view of the whole, and in that sense we do try to take in all factors which are concerned. In a way I was delighted to hear of the five geographers from Cambridge who have taken jobs other than as geographers. I hope they will take the geographical point of view into their respective spheres, which is after all what we want. In the old days a man who got a degree in classics did not therefore get employment as a Greek or Latin scholar. He went into administration and showed us how to run the government, because of his background in a good discipline. We like to think of geography to-day as giving that broad point of view which is a real training in citizenship. I feel, Sir, that you have put before us very eloquently indeed that real objective. Geography as a discipline in the university to-day fits its students for a very wide range of posts (not necessarily called geographers; probably in most cases not).

With the background of this very valuable academic asset we are convinced that, given the opportunity, we have a part to play in the affairs of everyday life. In this country this is not yet fully recognized as it is in Poland. When *we* have made our maps and our survey we have to hand over to the professional planners; they are the ones who are given the opportunity of turning our ideas into practice. Many of us would like to go farther.

THE CHAIRMAN: Lord Nathan has given us a most imaginative and a practical address. He spoke of how in Poland use was being made of geographers in the rehabilitation of the country. There the destruction was very grievous and very devastating, but I am not sure that our problems are not just as great, and in fact bigger because, as the gentlemen here who are town planners will know, there is a great attraction in having a clean sheet on which to plan. You feel you can get ahead much better than if you have to fit all your work into what is already there. Our problem in this country is to fit a new world, a new plan into so much that exists. I think there is no doubt that we are in the midst of a tremendous revolution, something much greater than the industrial revolution, and that this country is by way of having to be rebuilt from beginning to end. We are talking of expanding our towns. I read in the papers to-day that all our ports are completely out of date, and of course we have got to have a new road system, to meet modern conditions. We cannot afford to neglect any bit of information that we can have so that we can get as far as is possible the all-over view. In this we could advantageously harness universities and their geographical departments, and make them contribute to the knowledge that is necessary for reconstruction and planning. Lord Nathan has given us a great pointer as to what might be done, and I am sure you will wish, with me, to thank him very much.

*The vote of thanks to the Lecturer was carried with acclamation, and the meeting then ended.*

# SOVEREIGN NIGERIA

*A paper by*

SIR JOHN MACPHERSON, G.C.M.G.,

*lately Governor-General, Federation of Nigeria, read to the  
Commonwealth Section of the Society on Tuesday, 7th March,  
with the Rt. Honble. Viscount Boyd of Merton, P.C., C.H.,  
Chairman of Council, Royal Commonwealth Society,  
in the Chair*

THE CHAIRMAN: It is a very great pleasure to come to this lovely hall this afternoon and introduce Sir John Macpherson. When I became Secretary of State for the Colonies about seven years ago, I 'inherited' Sir John as Governor-General of Nigeria. Never did anybody find such richness on his plate as I did when I found Sir John among the benefactions handed to me by my predecessor. For some time we worked together, he in the field and I in the office, in the utmost harmony and growing personal friendship. Then when the time came for him to go, there was a vacancy as Permanent Under-Secretary of State in the Colonial Office and it was one of the supreme privileges of my tenure of office that I was able to pass on to him the suggestion that he should become Permanent Under-Secretary of State. So after years in the field he came to head the Colonial Office itself, and in that capacity as well he won the same golden opinions from all who worked with him as he had done when he was an administrator in all sorts of different territories. Above all, he won the confidence and affection of the rank and file, in Palestine, the West Indies, Nigeria, Malaya and elsewhere, and then again in the Colonial Office.

There is no one who knows the problems of Nigeria better than he, who knows it not only as a great country but as a country full of lots of people. It was with the people that he was at his happiest.

*The following paper was then read.*

## THE PAPER

I felt greatly honoured by the invitation from the Royal Society of Arts to give a talk on Nigeria—a country in which I left a large part of my heart. And I am doubly honoured by having you, My Lord Chairman, to support me on the platform. You were my greatly revered and utterly trusted Chief during important stages in Nigeria's graduation to independence, and later during three hectic but happy years in the Colonial Office, and now in the Royal Commonwealth Society. Nigerians are among those in all parts of the Commonwealth who will always have deep respect and affection for you.

I can't remember whether I chose the exact title for the paper, 'Sovereign Nigeria', or whether it was suggested to me. Whichever it was, the title obliges me to treat the subject in a fairly up-to-date way. I shall, therefore, not take up time with any historical account of our connections with Nigeria, though I may occasionally make an historical reference to illustrate a point. And I shall—a little reluctantly—refrain from describing the country and its people.

It was only in 1900, with the hoisting of the Union Jack at Lokoja, that the whole of what is now Nigeria came under direct British control. So graduation to independence took just 60 years. It was a continuous process, but the final laps, after the end of the last war, were, of course, run at a much faster pace than the early laps. Nigerians are justifiably proud of having achieved their goal of independence by constitutional means, without violence and without bitterness, and their relations with this country are warm, friendly and relaxed. In the very impressive and moving speech which the Federal Prime Minister Alhaji Sir Abu Bakar Tafawa Balewa, made on Independence Day, 1st October last, he referred to Nigeria's pride in belonging to the Commonwealth—'the Commonwealth', he said 'bound together by ties of loyalty to Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, whom to-day we proudly acclaim as Queen of Nigeria, and Head of the Commonwealth'. Throughout the celebrations of independence there was a quite wonderful atmosphere of unreserved and open-hearted friendship between Nigerian and British people.

The word 'Colonialism' has been given a very bad connotation in some quarters—it is almost a dirty word, even if it has more than four letters! But under British Colonialism, we who serve the Colonial people, as I have done for 40 years, have a stimulating sense of partnership with them. We feel that they and we together are building new, free and (we *hope!*) democratic nations in many parts of the world. There are, understandably, stresses, due to arguments between us and the political leaders in the Colonies about the pace of political advance, but there are no arguments about the ultimate objective of our Colonial policy, which is to help and guide our remaining Colonial territories to self-government or stable independence within the Commonwealth. In the case of Nigeria it is broadly true to say that there were not any serious arguments even about the pace of advance. The Federal Prime Minister, in the speech from which I quoted just now, made this point. 'History will show', he said, 'that the building of our nation took place at the wisest pace. It has been thorough and Nigeria now stands well-built upon firm foundations. . . . Each step of our constitutional advance has been peacefully and purposefully planned, with full and open consultation, not only between representatives of the various interests in Nigeria but in harmonious co-operation with the administering power which has to-day relinquished its authority.'

Why has this graduation been relatively so peaceful? Much of the credit is due to the Nigerians themselves: not a little to Britain: some to our two peoples jointly. But some of the reasons are historical or geographical accidents. And Nature herself can claim some of the credit. Let me discuss some of the reasons.

In the first place Nigeria—particularly the far North and the coastal areas in the South—has had long contacts with Europe. In the North, the contacts, back into the Middle Ages, were with North Africa and the Mediterranean, by caravans crossing the Sahara—hence the predominance of Islam in the North. In the South, starting with the Portuguese in the late fifteenth century, there came ships along the coast, bringing explorers and missionaries and traders—traders looking first for gold and ivory, then for slaves, and then, after the abolition of the slave trade, for palm oil. These contacts over the centuries made much easier Nigeria's entry

on to the world stage. But, apart from this, the Nigerians as a people (and this generalization holds, in spite of the wide diversity of African races in a country which is, in fact, a British creation) are vigorous, cheerful, practical people who understand the art of compromise and who have a very quick and heart-warming sense of humour. (One of the greatest bonds between them and us is the fact that we are moved to ready laughter by the same sort of joke or situation.)

Next, I would place the fact that Nigeria has no immigration problem—no problem of immigrants of any colour—and no land problem. First and foremost there is no white settlement, and this, more perhaps than any other factor, made easy the path of constitutional advance. We can't claim credit for this—it is here that Nature takes a bow. West Africa was for long, of course, known as 'The White Man's Grave', and I expect you all remember the old jingle:

Take heed and beware of the Bight of Benin  
Where few come out though many go in.

It is not like that now, of course, because of the health measures introduced during the Colonial period, and because of the new drugs to combat diseases such as malaria and yellow fever. But the climate remained unsuitable for white settlement, certainly for a second generation of white people. One of the political parties in Nigeria, some years ago, suggested, with a twinkle in their eyes, that it would be a good idea if the national flag of an independent Nigeria had a mosquito emblazoned on it, because malaria had 'saved' the country from white settlement. In fact, as you know, the Federal flag is plain green and white.

There is no problem of non-white immigration, such as we have created in some other Colonial territories, by bringing in indentured labour, often for work on plantations, after the abolition of slavery. These workers elected to stay on after their indentures expired and have increased and multiplied much faster than the indigenous people, whom in some cases they now outnumber. This did not happen in Nigeria—one reason being that from the very beginning of the British administration the land was held for the Nigerian people, most of it under communal ownership. And agriculture, until recently, has been carried out almost entirely by peasant farmers. Perhaps we British cannot claim credit for not creating a non-white immigration problem in Nigeria, because, even if the Governments, both in the United Kingdom and in Nigeria, had not stoutly resisted the establishment of plantations by overseas interests, there would have been plenty of local labour available. But we *can* take credit for holding the land in trust for Nigerians—land in Africa being, as you know, a very explosive subject. It is interesting to note that, since decisions on these matters have rested with Nigerians, plantations (oil palm and rubber) have been established by British interests, usually, but not invariably, in partnership with local, Nigerian, interests.

An important reason for the smooth transition to independence—and one for which Britain *can* claim credit—was the fact that, after the end of the last war, we took the initiative in accelerating constitutional advance. I said 'after the last war'. You know, people are inclined to forget that strong feelings of nationalism, and the passionate desire for political freedom are quite recent phenomena in most of our Colonial territories. I can truthfully say that when I was first in Nigeria,

just before the last war, there was virtually no pressure or clamour for faster constitutional advance—certainly none outside Lagos. I was then a member of the Legislative Council, legislating only for the South, which had, in 1922, replaced the official and nominated legislative Council for Lagos which was set up immediately after our annexation of the island in 1861. It is proof of what I have said, about the absence of political pressures, that the 1922 legislative Council continued in being, with minor changes and additions in membership, until the end of 1946. The war and the speed-up of communications of all kinds, so that people in any one country know what is happening in other countries, widened the horizons of the Nigerian people and changed the whole climate of opinion. At the end of 1946 my predecessor, Sir Arthur Richards, now Lord Milverton, introduced a new Constitution known as the Richards Constitution, which marked a considerable advance. The two main features were that the North was, for the first time, represented in a Nigeria-wide legislative and that unofficial, Nigerian majorities were established in the central legislature and in the newly-created Regional Houses of Assembly, which were given very limited powers.

I returned to Nigeria, as Governor, in 1948. Partly because this Constitution, introduced less than 18 months earlier, was working so well, but partly also because I sensed that pressures were beginning to build up, both within and from without the country (Mr. Macmillan's wind of change, although by comparison with its present force it was no more than a summer zephyr!), I decided to take the initiative in suggesting that the pace of constitutional advance should be accelerated. And I took the bold—even brash—step (it frightens me when I think of it now, but I was younger then!) of asking the country to tell me what measure of constitutional advance it wanted. My confidence in the basic good sense of the Nigerian people proved justified, because, after a welter of constitution-making, in a very homespun way, without Constitutional experts, the proposals that emerged from a series of Conferences, starting at the Provincial level and building up to a Central, widely-representative and virtually all-African Central Conference, were readily acceptable to me, and to the United Kingdom Government. The franchise was greatly widened, the only qualifications being age and payment of tax, and election was through a series of electoral colleges, beginning with the informal choosing, by groups of about 500 in villages and quarters of towns, of one of their number to go forward to the next stage.

The Regional legislatures were given legislative powers in matters of Regional concern, but the Central Government was still very powerful. Perhaps the most important change was the introduction of the Ministerial system, Nigerian Ministers being in a significant majority both at the Centre and in the Regions.

This Constitution started off, with high hopes, on 1st January, 1952, but it broke down in less than eighteen months, for reasons which we can leave historians of the future to assess. It is sometimes referred to as the Macpherson Constitution, but I tease my Nigerian friends by reminding them that it was conceived by Nigerians (though I would admit to being a sort of midwife!), and by suggesting that it was only after it broke down that it came more commonly to be called after me!

A very critical situation was resolved by the Conference in 1953-4, in London and later in Lagos, between Her Majesty's Government and widely representative Nigerian delegations. In spite of some stormy passages, statesmanship and a spirit of compromise on all sides won the day, and agreed conclusions were reached. The Chairman was Mr. Oliver Lyttelton, now Lord Chandos, and a very fine Chairman he was. The most extreme Nigerian nationalists were surprised to find how well they got on with him, and how much they liked and admired him. And the relationship was carried on, even more warmly, with you, My Lord Chairman. In my view the most important aspect of this Conference was that during its deliberations, even the most extreme Nigerian nationalists, with little or no previous experience of negotiations with representatives of Britain, became convinced of the good faith of Her Majesty's Government, and of their sympathy with Nigerian aspirations. There were no serious difficulties thereafter.

It was this Conference that decided, unanimously, that Nigeria should have a fully Federal form of Constitution, and it is this Constitution which is broadly still in force—the principal changes being that all the legislatures—Federal and Regional—are now bicameral, and that fundamental human rights have been written into the Constitution, mainly for the protection of minorities, that is, the less numerous African races or tribes.

Sometimes when I discuss Nigerian politics with young Nigerians—especially students—as I frequently do, they accuse us, the British, of inventing 'Regionalism', thus exacerbating feelings between the different Nigerian Regions and races—as part of the hoary old allegation of British wickedness and guile—'Divide and Rule'. I do not find any difficulty in shooting this down—to my entire satisfaction at least. I remind those young critics of the early history of their country, and of the fact that it was the Richards Constitution that brought the Northerners for the first time into a Nigeria-wide legislature. To make this possible, Sir Arthur Richards had to give a measure of Regional autonomy—otherwise the North would never have agreed to join in. I go on to remind them that it was widely-representative Nigerian delegations which decided, in 1953, in favour of a Federal Constitution, giving much greater powers to the Regions than had either the Richards or the so-called Macpherson Constitution. I clinch this argument by saying what a good thing it was that this decision was taken. The Federal Constitution allowed matters of local concern—matters closest to the hearts and lives of the people—to be decided locally, and reduced fears of discrimination. It also took up a lot of steam in the Regions, and gave training in responsibility to many more people—Ministers and others—than would have been possible under a unitary Government. I add that it was always my hope and belief that in time there would be a swing towards a stronger Federal Government, as usually happens in Federations. It is happening in Nigeria.

From the introduction of the Federal Constitution on 1st October, 1954, the transition to independence was smooth. There were further Constitutional Conferences—entirely harmonious—under your Chairmanship, Sir, in 1957 and 1958. Regional self-government was granted to the Eastern and Western Regions in 1957 and to the Northern Region in 1959. Difficult questions—in particular

the fears of minorities and revenue allocation—were tackled realistically, aided by strong Commissions which you appointed. In fact, Nigeria had had internal self-government for some years before independence, and the only real change that took place on 1st October last was the formal transfer of responsibility for defence and external affairs. I say 'formal' transfer because, through the wisdom of Sir James Robertson, the last British Governor-General, the 'business' in those spheres had for some time been dealt with in the Prime Minister's Office—although the Governor-General still retained the actual responsibility. Indeed, for many years Nigerians—Ministers, officials and experts—had attended Commonwealth and international conferences, as part of the United Kingdom delegation or as associate members.

In the past, I have had the temerity to suggest a list of the criteria by which it can be judged whether the time has come for the final transfer of power to a Colonial territory. I will not recite these now but they can be inferred for the reasons I give for saying that Nigeria was ready for independence.

First, there is a feeling of nationhood, a common loyalty, the willingness and ability to live harmoniously together after the withdrawal of British authority. It was not always so. Because of the great diversity of African races or tribes there was a very real danger that inter-tribal quarrels and jealousies might lead to a break-up of the country. We went through some very bad patches, now happily forgotten. The feeling of Nigerian nationhood, until recently a rather tender plant, is constantly growing stronger, especially amongst the younger generation of educated Nigerians.

Second, Nigeria has a Government which is broadly acceptable to the people—elected on what is virtually universal adult suffrage (male suffrage in the North—except for plebiscites conducted under United Nations auspices!). And although evidence is not wanting, in various parts of the world, that our system of parliamentary democracy does not always export well, it can fairly be said that it has taken root in Nigeria. After all, Nigerians have been practising the system for quite a long time. The first elected Africans anywhere in British Tropical Africa were the four Nigerians elected to the 1922 Legislative Council—thirty-nine years ago. There are recognized parliamentary oppositions in the Federal and Regional legislatures, and elections have resulted in a change of Government. Moreover, the diversity of African races provides checks and balances which should operate to prevent a slide into authoritarianism.

The Government should have no difficulty in maintaining law and order—the first duty of any Government. There is an efficient and impartial Judicial system, with Nigerian and British Chief Justices and Judges, entirely independent of the executive. There is a well-trained and well-disciplined Federal Police Force, with Nigerian and British senior officers. And there is a small but efficient Army, with a proud record in peace and war. British officers are still in a majority but Nigerian officers—Sandhurst-trained—are coming along fast, and the first Nigerian troops to go to the Congo to assist the United Nations—the 5th Battalion of the Queen's Own Nigerian Regiment—were commanded by Colonel John Ironsi, a Nigerian.

A country should have an efficient and impartial Civil Service, willing to serve

loyally whatever Government is in power. Africanization of the service in Nigeria has been very rapid since 1948, thanks to a planned programme of scholarships and training grants. There are plenty of graduates, though they are a bit short on experience (and more in the pipe-line—there are 7,000 young Nigerians, men and women, undergoing courses of study in this country at the moment quite apart from those in Nigerian universities and colleges). In the Eastern and Western Regions the proportion of senior posts held by Nigerians is, I think, between 80 and 90 per cent. It is smaller in the Federal Service and in the Northern Region, but they are catching up. There are still considerable numbers of British officers, loyally serving African Governments, and up till now the Ministers have wanted most of them to stay. Unhappily many of them, too many as I think for Nigeria's sake, are leaving, not because they are reluctant to serve African Governments but because political uncertainties and the inevitable and understandable pressure from Nigerian Civil Servants to take over all the senior posts mean that there can be no secure career prospects. But Nigeria will 'get by' with its Civil Service, though standards of efficiency are likely to deteriorate for a time.

In the economic field, Nigeria's national income is still very low by comparison with the rich, industrialized countries of the world, but it is rising steadily and on independence the economy was buoyant. The amount of new buildings and development of all kinds is fantastic. It is still mainly an agricultural country, and the millions of peasant farmers produce not only the food that the country needs but very large quantities of varied cash crops for export, under a very efficient marketing board system. There is a good spread of minerals, including, recently, oil. Industrialization is going ahead fast, and the Governments are anxious to attract capital and know-how, preferably, but by no means exclusively, from this country. They offer attractive inducements by way of tax concessions, and guarantees against confiscation. The basic services without which economic development is impossible—road and rail transport, harbours and airfields, electric power and water supplies—have been provided on a considerable scale by the Government or by quasi-independent Corporations created by the Government to operate these services. (The capital investment programme of the Government and the Corporations for the five years up to 1962 was estimated to cost over £300 million.) Nigeria will continue to need outside help on a large scale for her major development projects, but she is economically self-reliant and her people have the prospect of a reasonable standard of living in an expanding economy. And the social services are constantly expanding. (The Report of the Ashby Commission on Post-school Certificate and Higher Education in Nigeria paid deserved tribute to what Nigeria has herself done in the field of education in recent years—and it quoted one Regional Government as appropriating more than 40 per cent of its budget to this service.)

I have tried to show why Nigeria's graduation was peaceful, and to demonstrate that the necessary conditions for independence were fulfilled. What of the present political situation? And what of the future?

First, the political parties. It is unfortunate that the three major political parties are, or were, based to a considerable degree on the three several Regions, and there-

fore have or had special affinities with the major Nigerian races in the different Regions. Happily this situation is changing. The Northern People's Congress—the N.P.C.—is, as its name indicates, a Northern Party—mainly Hausa-Fulani, supported by the Emirs and having a strong Native Administration flavour. It is in power in the Northern Region. The National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons, the N.C.N.C., was founded by Dr. Azikiwe, the Nigerian nationalist who has been longest on the political stage and who is now, of course, Governor-General. It has a strong Eastern, especially Ibo, flavour but claims to be country-wide. It is in power in the Eastern Region but has a considerable number of seats, both Regional and Federal, in the Western Region. And it has a rather strange alliance with the opposition party in the Northern Region, the Northern Elements Progressive Union, or N.E.P.U., although the N.C.N.C. is allied to the N.P.C. in the Federal Government. The Action Group—in origin a Yoruba party, founded by Chief Awolowo as the political spear-head of a Yoruba *risorgimento*—is in power in the Western Region, but has a not insignificant number of seats, under its own party label or those of its allies, in the other two Regions, as well as in the Federal House of Representatives.

In the Federal Elections held at the end of 1959, the N.P.C. won 142 seats out of a total of 312 in the House of Representatives. This was just 15 seats short of an over-all majority, so the party had to look for an ally, to form a coalition. For reasons not unconnected with the attitude of the Action Group towards the N.P.C., and the vigorous and aggressive election campaign waged by the Action Group in the Northern Region, the alliance was made with the N.C.N.C. There is thus an N.P.C.-N.C.N.C. coalition Federal Government. Chief Awolowo 'went Federal' (a very healthy sign) and gave up the Premiership of the Western Region to lead the opposition in the House of Representatives. Although the Action Group holds rather less than a quarter of the seats they form an effective Opposition which will keep the Government on its toes. I regard it as very fortunate, for the unity of Nigeria, that the Government in power, on independence, was a North-South coalition. Frankly, I should have been nervous if the N.P.C. had won an over-all majority, and I should almost have despaired of unity being maintained if the N.C.N.C. and the Action Group had formed an alliance and had squeezed out the N.P.C., which won by far the biggest number of seats. I feel sure that, as time goes on, the political parties will become more national and less Regional or tribal, and that the danger, happily averted on this occasion, will be less in future elections.

What of the future? There are of course difficulties and even dangers ahead—and the Nigerian leaders are very conscious of them. Internally, vigilance and continuous mutual tolerance will be required to maintain the unity of the country. The Government is not without its critics, especially amongst the younger Nigerians, particularly the students. Some of these say that the Government is not dynamic enough, some that it is not socialist enough. Criticism is voiced regarding the personal expenditure of Ministers—their emoluments, houses and cars. And you may have read of protests, by students, regarding the two-way Defence Agreement with Her Majesty's Government, freely entered into by the leaders of all the political parties. I do not pretend to be fully abreast of Nigerian affairs now,

but I would hazard a guess at two reasons which might account for the criticism. The first is that the Federal Government is a coalition. I have explained my reasons for being glad that this is so—but a coalition does involve a measure of compromise. My second suggested reason for such criticism as exists is the very smoothness of the transition. Because Nigerians had in effect taken over the reins of Government well before independence, there was not any sufficiently dramatic change to satisfy young politically-minded Nigerians. Internally the Government is, in a memorable phrase of my predecessor's, Lord Milverton, 'broad-based on the people's will', and I do not expect trouble.

It is in foreign affairs that Nigeria will meet her most difficult problems. I rather wish that there could have been all-party agreement on foreign affairs, leaving domestic issues to be fought out with vigour. In external affairs, Nigeria has to think of West Africa, of Africa as a whole, of the Commonwealth, and of the United Nations and world affairs. In world affairs, the principal issue for Nigeria, since independence, has been neutralism versus alignment. Before independence the leaders of all the main political parties declared themselves against neutralism and non-alignment, declared their sympathies with the free democracies of the West. Then, I think, pressure began to build up amongst the younger generation of Nigerians, in the South at least, in favour of neutralism. My guess is that here, too, there had to be compromise. In a measured pronouncement the Federal Prime Minister stated that Nigeria would not, as a matter of routine, side with either of the major power blocs but would determine her stand on every issue in the light of her own true interests. In my respectful view this was a wise pronouncement and should be fully acceptable to us and to other members of the Commonwealth. In the West African scene Nigeria has looked with a rather detached eye at proposals for a Confederation of West African States. She is willing and anxious to have the maximum economic co-operation but feels that she has enough on her own plate for the moment without rushing into proposals for a Confederation. The absence of Nigerian representatives at recent Conferences, such as that at Casablanca, is significant. As regards the sorely disturbed Continent of Africa, Nigeria will surely inject an element of stability. But she is an African country and this will in large measure condition her thinking. This applies to the views she will express—forcibly—within the Commonwealth—proud as she is of her connection with it—on such subjects as racial discrimination and the grant of independence to other African countries that are still dependent. She will come under heavy pressure from anti-Colonial elements, not least in the United Nations. Sometimes she may take a line which disappoints us, but if that happens we must be understanding. We must continue to give her our friendship, and we must continue to offer our help—help offered in a way that does not hurt her national self-respect. Above all, we must respect her absolute independence.

I am optimistic by nature, and I am deeply attached to Nigeria and the people. (One of my proudest boasts is that I am accepted as an honorary Nigerian.) I believe that Nigeria will remain united and will speak with authority in Commonwealth and world counsels, as by far the biggest African nation. And she will, please God, inject an element of stability into the distressfully disturbed continent of Africa.

## DISCUSSION

MR. PETER KENYATTA: The speaker has said little about the progress which Nigeria has made since political independence. I should like to ask him whether he really considers that what we have in Nigeria now is really independence? It seems to me that the so-called Defence Agreement which Britain forced Nigeria to sign is not compatible with independence. Another thing hard to reconcile with independence is that the Nigerian Army is still controlled by British officers.

THE LECTURER: The Defence Agreement was a two-way agreement, of benefit to both sides, freely entered into by the leaders of all the parties. It was not forced upon Nigeria and was not a condition of independence: the lie has been given to that statement by the Federal Prime Minister himself.

As to the Army being still controlled by British officers, I said that British officers were in the majority, but that Nigerians were being trained and were coming along. There are about five friends of mine who are majors, apart from my good friend Colonel Ironsi, but of course it takes time. I would remind the questioner that it took a good deal of persuasion to get educated Nigerians, particularly those in the south, to regard the Army as a career.

MR. M. K. GBAJA-BIAMILA: Sir John referred to the rôle of the students and their criticism of the present régime. The future belongs to the students, and that is why they should be so critical. My question is in regard to the statement he made about Chief Awolowo and the wish for a republic of Nigeria, as if that were a sinister ambition. May I point out that South Africa is intending to become a republic within the Commonwealth?

THE LECTURER: I made no criticism of Chief Awolowo. I quoted a speech by the Federal Prime Minister about Nigeria's pride in acclaiming The Queen as Queen of Nigeria and I said that I had noticed recently that Chief Awolowo had been advocating a transition to a republic. I hazarded a guess that his main purpose in this was to act as an Opposition and look for any weapon he could use. But the record is there to show that the United Kingdom Government and the rest of the Commonwealth leave it to the decision of any member whether it wishes to be a republic or a monarchy. There are all kinds of constitutions. You have got the countries which have accepted The Queen as their Queen, you have republican forms, and you have the Federation of Malaya which has its own sovereign ruler. The matter is for discussion and decision by Nigeria.

MR. J. E. BELL: The lecturer has mentioned the question of Nigeria's Army, but there has been no reference to the Navy. The other question I should like to ask is, what is the position with regard to the Air Force?

THE LECTURER: There is a Nigerian Navy, small as yet. One of the nicest functions I have attended in recent years was when I went down to Portsmouth a year or two ago and saw a Nigerian crew take over from a Royal Navy crew a frigate which is now H.M.N.S. *Nigeria*. A lot of Nigerian naval personnel came in from the old Nigerian Marine, and of course many of the people in Nigeria are as much at home in or on the water as they are on land. But it becomes very expensive. Nigeria has coastal craft, anti-submarine chasers, but nothing in the way of a capital ship, and the biggest ship among them is a frigate.

The Air Force—not as yet, but Nigerian pilots have been trained.

MR. PETER KENYATTA: Nigeria's independence is not threatened by any foreign power, it is not threatened by Ghana, by Guinea, Russia or China, so I do not see any reason why there should be any form of Defence Agreement between Britain and Nigeria. Nigeria is not seeking an Empire or any sphere of influence.

THE LECTURER: I would ask the questioner if he wants a Nigerian Army?

MR. KENYATTA: Yes.

THE LECTURER: Then I should like to point out that one of the two-way parts of the agreement was that the United Kingdom should continue to give assistance to the Nigerian Army, for example by training Nigerian officers at Sandhurst. That is part of the service which we give in return for overflying and staging rights, and that is the be-all and end-all of the Defence Agreement, which was entered into freely and fully without reservation of any kind by the leaders of all the parties.

THE CHAIRMAN: Without any compulsion of any sort. I think we really have exhausted this particular point. You have here the Permanent Head of the Colonial Office (a former Governor-General), and the Secretary of State at the time, and we say that the Agreement was entered into freely and fully, without the slightest hesitation. It was a two-way agreement and included Chief Awolowo. When I suggested that we might sign a document, all four people concerned said, 'We are all gentlemen together, are our signatures really necessary, are our words not enough?'. It was in that spirit that the Defence Agreement was signed.

MR. BAYO ODUWOLE: In Sir John's talk there was a mention of a coalition government on independence. Does he think that a continuance of an effective coalition government will produce an effective opposition?

THE LECTURER: I discussed this with some of my Nigerian friends when I was in Lagos in October. We discussed what kind of government Nigeria should have on independence. A number of people were in favour of all-party government on independence because the country was entering upon a critical stage. When we discussed this in Lagos, however, we felt that an all-party government is good only for a period of crisis, because when the crisis is over it tends to stultify parliamentary debate; or else the situation arises—I saw it at one time in Nigeria—where every backbencher is criticizing the government. We thought, as I mentioned in my paper, that it would be excellent if they could have all-party agreement in foreign affairs so that the spokesmen of Nigeria in the United Nations and elsewhere could know that they were speaking for the whole country. But I do not think that would be acceptable to the opposition, even if it was to the government.

As to whether a coalition government will produce an effective opposition, I do not see why not. The obverse of the danger of splitting apart is that there are checks and balances to prevent Nigeria sliding into authoritarianism. We British are sometimes criticized for (as people say) imposing on these new countries, with immature and rather volatile populations, our model of parliamentary democracy which we have worked out over the years as suitable to our own needs and our national character. I say we do not impose it; we should be quite happy if they worked out some form of government by consent suitable to their own circumstances, but it is our system they demand and no other. I do not see, then, how we can say in effect, this is all right for us, but it is no good for you. You cannot generalize about Africa, but broadly speaking I think it is true that in African tribal society there is a great deal of discussion before a decision is taken and then there is unanimity; there is not a continuing majority and minority; so it will take time for our system to become accepted.

President Nkrumah said to me one day before independence, 'Sir John, before independence there cannot be an opposition because there is only one platform, the struggle for independence, and I am on it. After independence an opposition can grow.' But there is sometimes a tendency, or a temptation, on independence for the party in power at the time to use that power to perpetuate its own rule and to regard an opposition not as a possible alternative government, but as a subversive organization. I believe that if parliamentary democracy in some form is the declared aim it will ultimately be established because of its attraction to people brought up in our tradition, but I do not see why in this diverse country of Nigeria a coalition between

two parties should stultify opposition. I think in the special circumstances of Nigeria a coalition government leaving one strong party in opposition is quite healthy democracy.

MR. M. OLA KOTUN: Earlier in this discussion, when answering another speaker, Sir John referred to the difficulty there was in persuading educated Nigerians to regard the Army as a career. I would add, that though there has been plenty of criticism from students, how many of us who came to this country to study took an interest in the Army as a career?

May I ask Sir John whether he can approve the present division of Nigerian Regions into provinces?

THE LECTURER: If I understand the questioner, he is talking about the units of federation. It is true that by normal canons of federation, it does look a bit lop-sided, because the Northern Region has three-quarters of the area and more than half the population. Over the years suggestions have been made that it would be better to have a greater number of smaller units, partly with the idea of having a stronger federal government. This was looked into most carefully by the Commission on the fears of minorities, which the Chairman appointed, headed by Sir Henry Willink, and the purpose of that Commission was basically this very problem. Having looked at it all round they decided the right answer was to put fundamental human rights in the constitution, because once you start chopping off one bit there is no end to it. There are 250 or 300 ethnic groups in Nigeria and the process would go on indefinitely. So the answer is we stand on fundamental human rights, for the time being at least.

MISS A. A. ETIM: Sir John did mention that he has some fears, now that so many Nigerians are being employed in the top posts in the country, that the standards will deteriorate. May I ask whether you are doing anything to prevent this—because, after all, Nigeria has always looked up to the British as her guide—or just leaving us to learn by our mistakes?

THE LECTURER: Being a realistic sort of person, I said that Nigeria would get by with its Civil Service. There are plenty of graduates though they are a bit short of experience, but that is not their fault and they will very quickly pick it up. It may be that we started our Nigerianization too late, but now there are qualified Nigerians for all the departments. There are, as I said, eighty to ninety per cent already in the East and West, and therefore all they need now is increased experience. Incidentally, it is much easier to make an African Minister than an African Permanent Secretary.

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not like that one!

MR. C. C. NDU: Sir John said the 'Macpherson Constitution' broke down within eighteen months for reasons which must be left to future historians to assess. Can he tell us now what he thinks those reasons were?

Also, though Sir John spoke of the fact that young Nigerians accused British administrators of inventing regionalism, he has not answered the charge.

THE LECTURER: I said that the so-called 'Macpherson Constitution' broke down in less than eighteen months for reasons which I thought we might leave historians to the future to assess. My conscience is quite clear about what the historians will find, but one should not divulge Cabinet secrets. I should very much like to tell the whole story.

On the other point I claim that we British officers in Nigeria were often better Nigerians than many of the Nigerians themselves. I will go further and say that we were better West Africans than the individual Nigerians, Ghanaians, and so on, were. I said that I reminded these young critics of the earlier history of their country. I won't go back to the Middle Ages or even the Portuguese, but until 1914 there were two entirely separate administrations: the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria and the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria. They were brought together under

Lord Lugard in 1914, but they were still poles asunder, and the 1922 legislature (which lasted until 1946) legislated only for the South, and the Governor legislated for the North by Order in Council. Lord Milverton's predecessor, Sir Bernard Bourdillon, started working on it and tried to find some way of bringing the country together. The North would never have agreed in 1946 to join a unitary government. They would have said that the northern Islamic way of life was going to be gravely interfered with, but when they realized they would have a measure of regional autonomy, so that they could look after things closest to their hearts, they were prevailed upon to come in. That was an act, not of division but of cohesion, and the 'Macpherson Constitution', hammered out by Nigerians, gave more power to the Regions; but still the centre was very powerful; it could legislate on any subject, and it was the Nigerians themselves, in conference, who said, No, let us go much further and give more power to the Regions.

MR. R. O. E. ALILIONWU: I should like to ask what is being done in this country to educate the British people about what is going on in the Commonwealth.

THE LECTURER: When I was at school fifty years ago, I learned about the American Colonies, I learned about Canada, Australia, New Zealand, about South Africa; learned a bit about our Indian dependency. I learned almost nothing about the Colonial territories except by reading about missionaries or explorers, such as Livingstone. I suppose I felt a pride of empire when I looked at the map of the world with its large patches of red. I agree with what is behind the question—that there is still a deplorable amount of ignorance in this country about other Commonwealth countries. People from these countries are often deeply hurt when they come here, having had our history, our relations, our way of life stuck down their throats; they come here expecting us to be knowledgeable about and interested in their colonies, and to be proud of our association with their countries. They find we do not know Kenya from Nigeria, and any interest shown usually relates to old tribal customs, or to the wild life of the country concerned. To that extent I am wholeheartedly with the questioner.

But the situation is a great deal better than it was when I was young. Let us take Parliament. When I was a young officer many years ago, Parliament debated Colonial affairs on perhaps two days in the year, in an almost empty chamber. Now scarcely a week goes past without some Colonial matter being debated. And when I was at the Colonial Office with the Chairman he had more Parliamentary questions than any other Minister—over a thousand a year. I gather they are dropping off a little now, Sir!

Now, what are we doing? The Ministry of Education, the British Council and the various Commonwealth Societies are spreading knowledge about the Commonwealth. I myself am Chairman of the London Conference on Overseas Students, and I would be very pleased to send you a pamphlet to show you what we are doing. At the end of December I took part in a youth study conference at the Royal Commonwealth Society with 250 sixth-formers from fifty London schools. They spent two days listening and debating about Africa. I was deeply impressed by their interest and knowledge and by the searching questions they asked. There are still deplorable gaps but it is getting better all the time.

LORD NATHAN, P.C., T.D., F.B.A., P.R.G.S.: I am here as a Member of Council of the Royal Society of Arts to tell Sir John Macpherson how delighted we are that he has given this most interesting lecture to-day. I was particularly glad to hear him, because though I suppose for the last forty years I have known the Permanent Under-Secretaries of State at the Colonial Office and a good many of the Governors of Nigeria, by some mischance I have missed Sir John Macpherson. I think that it must have been because when we come to old age the younger civil servants are no longer interested in us, and to me Sir John Macpherson was one of the younger civil servants! You know, and all of us who are not intimately familiar with his work

in Nigeria fully realize, the quality of man that he is. How fortunate Nigeria was, how fortunate the United Kingdom is, to have such men serving the public interest in the way in which they do. He has shown that once more by coming here this evening.

*The vote of thanks to the Lecturer was carried with acclamation.*

As regards Lord Boyd: he is a bit of a mystery to me. I well remember when Alan Lennox-Boyd became a member of the House of Commons, but when I was told to-day that Lord Boyd was to take the Chair, I said, 'Who is Lord Boyd?'. I commend him for retaining part of his patronymic, but I do wish he had retained the whole of it, because Lennox-Boyd is a name which has made itself familiar and respected in British history and the history of the Commonwealth. Those of us who know him and his work (whether we always agree with what he has said or done matters not) recognize that it has all been done with a profound sense of public duty, and an unflinching regard for the general interest both of the Commonwealth and of the individual units within the Commonwealth. He has brought to the House of Lords all that knowledge which he has gained over a long, successful and memorable Secretaryship of State. Even now he has left the debate on Rhodesia in the House of Lords, as I have, because he thought (and I thought) that to-day Nigeria was more important.

*The vote of thanks to the Chairman was carried with acclamation, and the meeting then ended.*

## GENERAL NOTES

INDUSTRIAL ART BURSARIES EXHIBITION: OPENING ADDRESS BY SIR JOHN SUMMERSON

*As announced on page 487 of this issue, the exhibition of winning and commended designs from the 1960 Industrial Art Bursaries Competition was opened on 2nd May by Sir John Summerson, who spoke as follows:*

More than thirty years ago I entered for a competition promoted by the Royal Society of Arts. It was for the corner treatment of a building and was to include, I think, a decorative fountain. In due course I was pleased to hear that I had been awarded a prize—or rather half a prize, because I was bracketed equal with another candidate. Some time later I received a cheque—also the judges' report. This was rather short. The judges said that while they had felt able—just—to make these two awards, it was a pity that only two designs had been submitted. Of my other early triumphs as a designer I could tell you much if time allowed but I am here to open this exhibition, not to close it; and the only reason I make this autobiographical allusion is to contrast the apparent lack of interest in the Society's competitions in those days with the fact that a record number of entries—726 in all—were received for the competition of 1960.

The flash-back does, however, also induce some profounder reflections. I have been trying to recapture the kind of 'vision' of design one had in those days with the habitual 'vision' of to-day. Those of us who are over fifty have witnessed the most extraordinary change in the world of design—a change of which we experienced the beginnings in this country in the late 'twenties (1927 is to me always a key year) and of which we now see the total fulfilment. The change is perhaps best epitomized in the history of a word which I think I am right in saying has almost dropped out of use—'modernism'. My impression is that the word is so nearly obsolete that if one were to say 'the age of modernism' one would immediately be understood to mean the period roughly between 1910 and 1940, with 'modernism' taking on its sharpest edge in the late 'twenties. 'Modernism' is dead. Nothing to-day is more 'modern' than anything else.

Now the accomplishment of a great change like this lands us in a most curious

position. Everything which could be foreseen thirty years ago has happened. The buildings which were no more than paper extravaganzas in cult magazines of the 'twenties are rising in every great city. The objects which were exotic and alarming by their sheer simplicity are now the commonplace of every shopping street. It seems incredible that such things as 'sans serif' lettering, spherical ceiling lights and steel chairs were once things for the few and that those few were indubitable cranks. But so it was.

It is a formidable thing to have 'arrived'. It can breed boredom and frustration. When everything seems to have been done at least once it is not much fun doing it again; nor is it much fun poking about to discover the odd thing which has not been done: young designers may sometimes feel that they are living in a 'mainstream' epoch when competence and decent quality are the only available criteria and when all ways are barred to the spirit which wants to fly high—barred not by some challenging, breakable opposition but by the cotton-wool 'monoculture' of a world which is rapidly becoming universally middle middle-class.

This is a situation which enfolds and blankets and deadens a good deal of design aspiration to-day. What does it demand from the young designer? My answer would be that it demands from him greatly increased intellectual stamina and a greater sense of responsibility for relations of his art to history, to technology, to society. It would be the greatest mistake to imagine that because of the sense of 'arrival' which I mentioned just now, nothing is happening in the world of design. *Something is always happening*; the difficulty at the moment is to see what it is. The man whose intuition can identify the new unities, the new directions (which may not be strictly artistic directions) in a complex situation is the man who is going to lead in the next generation of designers.

I speak, of course, as an academic, as an observer of the design world rather than a participant, though since I became Chairman of the National Council for Diplomas in Art and Design, initiated earlier this year by the Minister of Education, my observation has begun to be considerably sharpened. In a world of so many councils and committees, this National Council is something of which you may not have heard—it is quite excusable not to have heard of it because it has not yet performed any visible work. Its function will be to give effect to the report of the Advisory Committee which has been sitting under the Chairmanship of Sir William Coldstream. The Coldstream report is a milestone in the recent history of art education in this country. Briefly, its recommendations are aimed at making everything more difficult for everybody—for art administrators, for art teachers and—most especially—for art students. It is a very worldly, a very tough-minded report which appreciates not merely that the proper place for the arts is the market place but that the arts are already there and must play an increasingly responsible and important rôle. The artist must be equipped with what the report nicely describes as a 'liberal education' in art. The business of my own Council, thick set with distinguished figures in art education and industrial design, will be to see that this is what he gets—not, let me hasten to add, by imposing some rigid educational pattern but by re-stating the Coldstream principles and then inviting art schools up and down the country to frame their own proposals for giving them lively effect. I spoke just now of the increased intellectual stamina which, in my view, the next generation of designers will need. That is precisely what we hope the Coldstream principles, put into practice, will elicit, not merely by educational practice, but by the challenge it will issue to ambitious men and women in search of a career.

All this bears very directly on the aims of this Royal Society, aims which are excitingly expressed in the exhibition you are just about to see. Art, Commerce and Industry are, as ever in the past two centuries, being 'promoted' under this roof.

To industry is due most of the wealth shortly to be distributed to the fortunate winners. To the Society is due some of this wealth and all of the administrative

mothering. To the competitors is due the initiative which makes this exhibition something worth visiting. Good luck to them all.

I have great pleasure in declaring the exhibition open.

THE AMERICAN MUSEUM, CLAVERTON MANOR, NEAR BATH

Man's determination to create around himself not only the necessities of existence but the indefinable atmosphere of a home has taken many contrasting forms in the United States of America. Yet this fascinating heritage has remained almost unknown in the Europe that inspired its pioneers to remember, to adapt, to compromise and then, brilliantly, to meet the challenge of strange conditions with a tough genius for invention. The first museum of these decorative arts to be established outside America opens to the public on 1st July in a handsome country house, Claverton Manor, some 2½ miles from Bath. Two Americans, English-born Mr. John Judkyn and Dr. Dallas Pratt of New York, have spent three years in collecting the exhibits and the Halcyon Foundation established by Dr. Pratt in 1956 is financing the project until an endowment can be built up. Mr. Ian McCallum, formerly Executive Editor of the *Architectural Review*, is Museum Director, assisted by Mr. David Johnson.



*The American Museum in Britain, Claverton Manor, Bath*

Within the framework of Wyatville's 1820 manor house, finely situated above the wooded valley of the Avon, a series of more than a dozen rooms has been created which trace chronologically the pattern of American home life from the pioneering days of the seventeenth century through the charming adaptations of changing European fashions associated with the early, middle and late eighteenth century, to the more grandiose conceptions of early nineteenth century 'Greek Revival' splendour and the overwhelming grandeur of the 1860s. It must be appreciated that each group of exhibits is housed as exactly as possible in an actual room brought from the

States, so that floors, ceilings, doorways become as important as their contents of contemporaneous furniture. One notes with pleasure such details as feathered panelling, a dentil cornice cut from solid pine, walls painted by an itinerant stenciller, a dated cast-iron fireback, sunlit windows with defensive shutters closed by sliding, a turn of staircase with its corner lantern and essential homespun 'valuables bag' ready for speedy evacuation under threat of fire or Indian attack.

It is a remarkable tribute to the enthusiasm and discernment of Mr. Judkyn and Dr. Pratt and their Museum staff that they have indeed achieved in each room a sense of a unit in a living household and not even, bleakly, an American household but one with a specific location, whether Philadelphia, Baltimore or New Orleans, in Massachusetts, New Hampshire or Connecticut. This careful selection allows the inclusion of such contrasting exhibits as a vivid group of 'Pennsylvania Dutch' furniture in the colourful, cluttered style long treasured by the Protestant immigrants from Switzerland and the Rhineland and a display of the clean-swept, finely designed furniture from the celibate Shaker communities, characteristically hung when not in use on the pegs that ring the walls.



*A small 19th-century country bedroom in the museum. The wooden wall panels are stencilled in imitation of wallpaper, and stencilling is also used to decorate the rocking-chair and the counterpane on the bed*

Throughout the Museum the furniture offers extremely interesting study, the woods including American pine, oak, maple, fruit woods, hickory, some bearing the grained effects and repetitive patterns in paint noted also in room panelling. One notes maplewood and walnut dyed to resemble mahogany in cabinet and chairs, and cherry wood used with delightful effect for graceful tea table and tripod teapoy. Among the earliest exhibits is a Bible box with its original iron hook-and-eye hinges once owned by Ruth Plumer, whose family settled in Massachusetts in 1634. There are some notably fine highboy cabinets and many elegant chairs that reveal intriguing

differences from contemporaneous 'Chippendale' and 'Sheraton' design. In the Greek Revival room Duncan Phyfe is well represented, and his apprentice Prudont Mallard was responsible for an impressive rosewood bed in the New Orleans bedroom of 1860, but much of the furniture has the pleasantly homely character of, for example, the nineteenth-century stencil-painted rocking chair and the field bed with its home-made netted canopy in the stencilled bedroom.

Because quilted bed coverlets and hooked rugs similarly made by the women of the family have contributed uniquely to the American home, there is an extensive display in a separate textile department, an important feature that will attract the many English needlewomen not alive to this country's own long and splendid tradition of quilting and patchwork. Another extremely important exhibit, housed in a special building in the 55-acre grounds, consists of a superb collection of American folk art. This is lent from the Williamsburg collection of the late Mrs. J. D. Rockefeller and is a fitting conclusion to a tour of the Museum, revealing Americans as they saw themselves before daguerreotype and camera banished the unselfconscious amateur and the journeyman artisan-craftsman.

Nevertheless, the most popular exhibits may well prove to be 'Conkey's tavern' from late eighteenth-century Massachusetts with its bakings of gingerbread in a beehive oven, and a country store already stocked with more than a thousand items including ledgers of the 1840s. Inevitably these rooms are furnished with less meticulous period accuracy but express an infectious delight in the many-sidedness of American life.

G. BERNARD HUGHES

#### ROYAL ACADEMY SUMMER EXHIBITION

It is not to plant any goad that one must state the simple truth that, however valiantly the Royal Academy's more progressive members strive to keep the Summer Exhibitions in touch with a few current trends, these miscellanies stir little attention outside the ranks of middle-aged and elderly picture-fanciers with fond sentiments of their own. Young students, finding here little or none of that expressionist and abstract art which nowadays takes its cue more from America than Paris and is the staple diet of the West End galleries, glance carelessly at the Academy's stalwarts. The oldster lingers. One sees him bending over those dusky temptresses of Sir William Russell Flint in the Water-colour rooms, not because they have anything fresh to reveal but perhaps because a memory is stirred of the hubbub this artist caused thirty-odd years ago with a studied composition entitled *Chattels* which roused Frank Rutter of the *Sunday Times* to protest that so unmistakable a reference to human barter was unworthy of the Academy. No Summer Exhibition, then, can be wholly featureless to the reminiscential, though even such indulgence may be strained by this year's show, which offers no major contribution in the absence of the late Stanley Spencer and expected paintings, alas unforthcoming, from Mr. Augustus John.

Yet one wonders. If progressive students are still capable of distinguishing the most searching realism from effete naturalism they must recognize the serious quality of the late Henry Lamb's half-length study of *Alfred Overton*. The head, seated torso, and beautiful hands are as firmly modelled as the best of Lamb's work, in latter years always soundest in such portraits of adolescence in his prevailing scheme of greens, yellow, and mauve. Again, it must be satisfying to anyone to discover an uncompromising self-portrait by Mr. William Roberts, an incisive diagonal design arguably more arresting than his larger compositions elsewhere. Most distinguished in these early rooms are the paintings of Professor Carel Weight, which include his study for the big canvas of *Shipwreck* shown in the 1951 Festival exhibition. Something of Kokoschka's bodeful spirit might be felt to haunt this stormy tumult of disaster with agitated figures streaming along the shore. Moving

as it is in every sense, a preliminary study cannot however be accounted a major full-scale achievement, which this exhibition so much needs.

An approach to the heroic manner is indeed essayed in Mr. Peter Greenham's robbed figure of General Sir Brian Horrocks, very deliberately placed yet rather too detached in its environment of khaki greens. Nor can Mr. Norman Hepple quite rise to the very demanding occasion of his portrait of The Queen, a reticent and not insensitive presentment but wanting in distinctive character. It is at this point that one turns to the Ruskin Spear portraits, never less than effective, and combining so often insight with irony. The best of his satirical heads, miracles of sheer painting, are probably undervalued to-day. Sometime they ought to be assembled in a congenial room, with pride of place to Mr. Krushchev in this Academy, and the Jimmy Edwards looming on a television screen in last year's. To walk on the tight-rope of high irony in paint is the most difficult feat imaginable, and Mr. Spear has occasionally coarsened his effect in the past and lunched into slapstick. But this year he might be thought to steal the show. Even so, there are good MacTaggarts and Redpaths from north of the Border, as well as satisfying paintings from Robert Buhler, Mrs. Jean Bratby, L. S. Lowry, and the Royal Academician Extraordinary, whose darkish, rather Lavery-like *Studio Sketch* is the best of Sir Winston's three contributions.

The sculpture this year is more than usually disappointing, relieved though it is by the hieratic aloofness of McWilliam's seated bronze image of *Baal*, by the menacing clawing and plated forms of Bryan Kneale's iron *Agamemnon*, and the gravely compassionate humanism of James Butler. The graphic art continues to maintain a uniform level of accomplishment in a very English kind, and the architectural models generally exhibit those customary characteristics which, once seen, are never remembered.

NEVILLE WALLIS

## DESIGN CENTRE AWARDS, 1961

H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh visited The Design Centre in the Haymarket, London, on 17th May, to present certificates to those manufacturers whose products had been singled out for this year's Design Centre Awards by a special selection panel under the chairmanship of Mr. Whitney Straight.

When the latest selection is compared with those made in former years it will be remarked that this time no carpets, fabrics or wallpapers have been chosen—in fact hardly anything which relies on decoration except as incidental to the whole design. This year the judges appear to have been chiefly attracted by qualities of line and form, and to have attached special importance to simplicity, economy of means and a proper use of materials. Their choice includes a towel rail, a table mirror, saucepans and a carving set, furniture castors, a range of unit furniture, a folding outdoor chair, a litter bin, a chemical closet, an oil-fired boiler, a slide projector, adjustable spotlights and a portable transistor radio. The last-named, which was designed by Mr. Eric Marshall, F.S.I.A., and made by Ultra Radio and Television Ltd., has also been awarded the Duke of Edinburgh's Prize for Elegant Design, 1961.

The thirteen products mentioned were chosen for these awards from over three thousand exhibits displayed during 1960 in The Design Centre or in the permanent exhibition of Street Furniture on the South Bank. They will be on public view at the Centre until 3rd June.

## BRITISH ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING, 1961

The 123rd Annual Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science will be held in Norwich from 30th August to 6th September, 1961, under the Presidency of Sir Wilfrid Le Gros Clark, F.R.S., Professor of Anatomy at the University of Oxford, the subject of whose opening address will be 'The Humanity of Man'.

A wide range of both fundamental and current topics will be discussed at the meetings of the various sections, including the detection of underground nuclear explosions, new particles, new sources of power, the living cell, food processing and health, the nervous system, the economic use of brains and the revolution in agriculture. The *Eidophor* process, which makes possible large screen projection of colour television, will be demonstrated in Norwich in three specially presented programmes by well-known scientists.

No scientific qualifications are required for membership of the Association, and all who are interested in the progress of science can join and attend the Meeting. Copies of the programme may be obtained without charge from the Secretary, British Association, 18 Adam Street, Adelphi, London, W.C.2.

#### INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HYDRAULIC RESEARCH

The International Association of Hydraulic Research, founded in 1938, is a world-wide organization of scientists and engineers whose object is to stimulate and promote all aspects of research in this field. At two yearly intervals the Association holds Congresses, the proceedings of which are subsequently published and form valuable records of the latest developments in hydraulics.

As a means of increasing the present, rather small, membership of the Association in this country, and of encouraging participation in its activities by British engineers and scientists, the Institution of Civil Engineers has set up a British National Committee to organize a British Section. A constitution for this is being drafted in which it is proposed that meetings may be organized in Great Britain from time to time for the discussion of subjects of interest to members of the Section. The Committee has invited the International Association to hold its Ninth Congress in London in 1963.

A memorandum giving details of the Association and application forms for membership may be obtained from the Secretary, British Section, I.A.H.R., c/o The Institution of Civil Engineers, Great George Street, London, S.W.1.

### OBITUARY

We record with regret the death of the following Fellow of the Society.

#### MR. JACKSON DODDS

Mr. Jackson Dodds, C.B.E., a former General Manager of the Bank of Montreal, died on 7th April, aged 80. His early experience of banking was gained in London, England (where he was born and educated) and in Western Canada, in the employ of the Bank of British North America. After meritorious service with the British Army in the First World War he held several, progressively more responsible, positions with the Bank of Montreal before becoming its General Manager in 1930. He retired in 1942, and subsequently devoted a great part of his time to work for the Boy Scout Movement and the Red Cross. He became Dominion Commissioner of the Canadian Boy Scouts Association in 1947, and three years later was appointed Canada's first Deputy Chief Scout. He attended several World Jamborees, and after that held in 1955 he was awarded the Bronze Wolf, which is regarded as international Scouting's highest award, and was also elected Honorary Vice-President of the Movement with Lady Baden-Powell.

Dodds was Chairman of the Central Council of the Canadian Red Cross Society from 1941-6 and received high French and Greek honours for his services to those peoples through the Red Cross. He was appointed O.B.E. in 1919 and advanced to C.B.E. in 1944. He became a Fellow of the Society in 1950.

## NOTES ON BOOKS

MUNTU: *An Outline of Neo-African Culture*. By Janheinz Jahn. London, Faber, 1961. 30s net

By 'neo-African' culture Mr. Jahn means a revival of an indigenous African culture, an African Renaissance, and he believes that there is already enough evidence to show that such a Renaissance, the legitimate heir of an African tradition, is on the way. His book is a review of that evidence, and, in relation to contemporary geopolitics, is of profound interest.

Mr. Jahn's method is first to establish standards proper to African culture (since 'there is no universal standard for the evaluation of cultures') and then to take each aspect of that culture in turn. Thus, there are separate chapters on Voodoo (African religion), *Rumba* (African dance), *Ntu* (African philosophy), *Nommo* (the magic power of the word), *Kuntu* (the African aesthetic as exemplified in sculpture, painting and the mask), *Hantu* (African literature), with a final chapter (*Blues*) on the conflict of cultures (in North America and Europe). *Muntu* (from which the volume takes its title) is one of the four basic concepts of African philosophy and signifies human beings (living and dead). The other three basic concepts are *Kintu* (thing), *Hantu* (place and time) and *Kuntu* (modality), and all being, in whatever form it is conceived, can be subsumed under one of these categories. 'Nothing can be conceived outside them.' Moreover, each category must be conceived not as substance, but as force. Man is a force, all things are forces, place and time are forces, the 'modalities' (e.g., beauty, laughter) are forces.

The exposition is clear and persuasive, and shows how aberrant our customary appreciation of African culture has been. Very few of the ethnologists have properly understood the basic presuppositions of the people they were studying, whereas the artists and critics of Europe and North America have completely misunderstood the aesthetics of African art and poetry. This does not mean that the influence of, for example, African sculpture on contemporary artists like Picasso and Brancusi has been worthless—art thrives on misunderstanding. But it does mean that we should hesitate to draw parallels between divergent cultures. The surrealists in particular are shown to have misunderstood African 'magic', though admittedly André Breton was the first to appreciate the significance of an African poet like Césaire.

One learns from differences rather than from similarities, and though it is a profound mistake to desert one's own cultural tradition, all artists in one culture can receive a strong stimulus from the art of another culture. It is not a question of stealing a secret, or even of assimilating a style. Cubism did not *assimilate* African sculpture—it took a superficial hint from it (structural opposition of plane surfaces) and used this 'motif' for its own cultural needs. This book, far from suggesting that we can learn anything from African culture, rather suggests that traditions are rooted deeply in their own soil, and cannot be transplanted. If they are transplanted and married, the offspring is always deformed.

It should be added that the translation from the German original by Marjorie Grene is accurate and felicitous.

HERBERT READ

ART IN NIGERIA, 1960. By Ulli Beier. Cambridge, University Press (in collaboration with Information Division of Home Affairs, Nigeria), 1960. 18s 6d net

AMERICAN NEGRO ART. By Cedric Dover. London, The Studio, 1960. 45s net

*Art in Nigeria* makes an immediate appeal by its pleasing format. The author, Mr. Ulli Beier, has chosen the illustrations with care to show the reader what is taking place in the way of new artistic development in Nigeria to-day. He gives examples of traditional carvings side by side with examples of how other Nigerian artists are blending Western traditions with their own native ones. He illustrates how new

buildings, such as the National Hall, Lagos, are acting as a stimulus to Nigerian art. He makes suggestions and a plea for the further use that might be made of Nigerian talent. He also shows the new art forms that are being developed by the use of new materials, such as the cement sculpture. Equally interesting is what the author tells us of the work of European artists living and working in Nigeria to-day, of the effect of Nigerian traditions on their work and how, conversely, contact with them is reflected in the work of Nigerian artists. Such cultural contacts and exchanges are clearly full of possibilities.

The Studio publication, *American Negro Art*, might at first sight appear a little disappointing if we approach it with preconceptions of what we are to find, for it contains in essence little of what we have come to think of as specifically African in quality. But it is precisely the contention of the author that these American negro artists are individuals, each following his own bent, rather than conscious members of a minority group, and that their work provides 'artistic evidence . . . of the most striking ethnic adjustment since the Voyages of Discovery'. Mr. Dover rightly stresses the distinctness of each of the many artists whose work he illustrates, and so abundant has been the work of these American negro artists that the numerous illustrations (200, eight in colour) strike one as being more in the nature of a catalogue than a selection made on a definite pattern. By showing the work of such a variety of artists and their many diverse styles the author makes us realize not only the extent of the negro contribution to American art, but also that these artists have become assimilated to Western cultural traditions. Amongst the painters there are only a few exceptions, like Ellis Wilson, Irene Clarke and Jacob Lawrence, in whose work one can remark any remotely 'African' quality.

The sculptors too seem normally to express themselves in a Western idiom. The potters alone seem to have kept some feeling of an African background in their work. The innocent eye of the Primitive Paintings has far more in common with Grandma Moses than with any African forebears. Even the 'folk art' of the nineteenth century falls into the American tradition. Evidently the impact of negro folksong on American folksong has no parallel where the visual arts are concerned. It is interesting to speculate why this should be so.

The two books studied side by side make a fascinating comparison and inevitably evoke the feeling that environment is the stronger factor, where the visual arts are concerned, and race merely accidental. In other words it is the environment that shapes the tradition and idiom. Away from his African background the negro artist adopts the visual art forms of the country in which he lives.

Conversely one sees from the 77 illustrations included in *Art in Nigeria* of the work of European artists done in Africa, how much they too respond to the traditional art forms prevalent there, and how, at the same time, the European tradition seeps through to African artists when they have European artists working in their midst.

The question arises as to which produces the more interesting results, the European artist influenced by African traditions or the African artist influenced by Western ones? Both books show that the answer most certainly depends on the quality of individual talent in each case.

ENID MARX

**DANGEROUS CORNER.** By Maurice Vlaminck (translated by Michael Ross). Introduction by Denys Sutton. London, Elek Books, 1961. 25s net

**A PRIZE FOR ART.** By Edward Wakeford. London, Macmillan, 1961. 25s net

The title of the first of Vlaminck's four books of autobiography comes from a passage in which he says that every artist must be judged individually and that he himself has no use for schools and groups of artists: 'When people believe that they have to be one of a crowd to pass a dangerous corner, it proves that they are frightened to stand on their own.' This, if the analogy is a true one, would seem to be sufficiently

obvious; and so are many of the other aphorisms scattered about the book: 'We count for little on this earth'; 'From watching people and things, I have learnt that you cannot buy or learn what is most worthwhile in life' (the significance of 'or learn' is not clear). It is a disconnected account, originally published in 1929, of the author's life—as a professional cyclist and violinist and as a conscript soldier in peace-time, and as a worker in a munitions factory in the 1914-18 war (one would not gather from this book that he had been a successful novelist), and painter; and opinions—his admiration of Van Gogh, whom he 'loved more than his father', Derain, Henri Rousseau and Modigliani, his dislike of Cubism and detestation of Picasso (which is expressed more virulently in *Portraits avant décès*, 1943), and his contempt for everything military. There are interesting anecdotes—of the man who takes off his cap as he passes the war memorial with his own name on it, and of Vlaminck's first visit to London (the date is not given) to paint the Thames and of how, when he considers he has done this, he spends some time as a pavement artist; appreciations of Cézanne, Renoir and Courbet; something about his own theory of painting, and a 'homily to his son'; but the book is disjointed: one derives more solid, coherent information from the introduction. Of the pictures reproduced the two which stand up best to appearing in black and white, and retain their power to enchant, are *The Church* (c. 1920) and *A Village under Snow* (c. 1925).

Mr. Wakeford's book, also autobiographical, is as different in kind from Vlaminck's as a compound is different chemically from a mixture. If in the former book enchantment can be found only in two of the pictures, *A Prize for Art* is wholly infused with it. This author is a painter, too, but in spite of his title, and although he tells us that a broken heart is the yardstick of art, we hear very little about his painting: it is what he hears, sees and does that he describes in a phrase tinged with a hint of private, personal arcana, so that the reader may fail to grasp it completely, but wishes that he could. 'We threw our bicycles down and watched the wheels going on spinning through the crushed grass in the revolving centuries of their own time.' (This was the day on which, when the two brothers came home after visiting Mr. Bowerman, they heard he had died two days before.) One wonders sometimes whether a child could think of things in this way; but then one comes across something like, 'It would be easy to fall in' [to the cesspool] 'by accident, but that could wait', and is reassured. One accepts, too, his story of how by an abuse of the power of faith he moved a mountain. How much one would like to understand (he is now a private soldier in Egypt during the last war): 'Only the size of a crack, the stain of a fly on an ankle of stone, could break with a little difference a sterility as absolute as unreciprocated love.'

It would be pleasant to know more of 'my burning stenographer of the Morden line', and of the Dachkevich family of Cairo ('they were all mad, crazy mad, and I longed to link my lot with theirs'); but the figure which dominates the book (even more than the author's grandmother who, besides her native Polish, could talk German, describe the Taj Mahal in French and swear in Hindustani, and whom once, in a dream, he met in heaven, which she thought to be Poland) is his father, the parson, a 'come-over' to the Isle of Man, from the time when the boy, who considered himself as God, was never quite sure that his father actually existed (it is clear that the father tried hard to understand and to 'communicate' with him), to that Eastertime in Egypt when

I wanted to see my father again. I wanted to see him in reality. How paltry and merely dutiful had been my efforts at understanding, how little advantage had I taken of the opportunities of getting to know him, which because they had seemed infinite I had always neglected. . . .

On the next page but one, the last in the book, he gets the news of his father's death.

HUMPHREY HIGGENS

ATLAS OF AUSTRALIAN RESOURCES. *Geology; Mineral Industry; Immigration; Croplands, and Manufacturing Industries. Prepared by the Department of National Development, Canberra. Sydney and London, Angus & Robertson, 1960. 10s 6d each*

With the publication of the last group of five sheets, Australia's National Atlas is complete and it is now possible to assess the significance of the whole work. The first editor was appointed in 1951 and the whole has been prepared by a small team, never more than seven, of geographers and cartographers, since 1956 under the editorship of T. W. Plumb. The Atlas consists of 30 sheets, 25 presenting single maps of Australia on the scale of 1:6,000,000, the other five carrying several smaller scale maps, making 82 in all. Each map sheet is accompanied by a commentary, usually about 7,000 words in length, published in booklet form, and these commentaries form an integral and very valuable feature of the whole.

Although Australia is a convenient shape to show on a single sheet, population and human activities are so essentially confined to the eastern, south-eastern and south-western fringes that most of the maps present a rather monotonous picture of nothing over three-quarters of the 3,000,000 square miles and then with relevant symbols so closely spaced in the settled portions as to make interpretation no easy matter. The geological map is a pleasing contrast; here is something to show over nearly the whole continent, and surprisingly little of the total area has not yet been the subject of at least a primary reconnaissance survey. Although mineral deposits are known and worked in a number of remote areas, is the absence of indications on the Mineral Industry Map of any workings over the vast interior suggestive of reserves yet unknown? As in other desert regions, modern methods of prospecting are making it possible to see at least partly through superficial deposits. Australia may have resources as yet unsuspected.

The compilation of material has been well done, the symbols chosen with care and thought, the reproduction is excellent, and the techniques employed—for example in the map of the mineral industry—are often strikingly ingenious. If there is a criticism it is that a magnifying glass is needed to see the detailed information available. The four maps of immigration—separating urban and rural and showing in each case the contribution of immigrants to total growth—afford a remarkable example of the immense amount of information which can be put on maps, available to those who have the patience to interpret it. But one fact seems to overshadow all others: the pull of the great cities, especially the twin magnets of Sydney and Melbourne.

L. DUDLEY STAMP

MATTER AND ANTIMATTER. By M. Duquesne. (Translated from the French by A. J. Pomerans.) London, Arrow Books (Arrow Science Series), 1960. Library edition, 10s 6d net; paper, 5s net

This series of paper-back monographs is to be welcomed for its cheapness and its excellence of production. This particular member of the series is, however, difficult to place. It is certainly not aimed at the general reader and uses as much physics and mathematics as might be expected from an undergraduate in his second year of university physics. This being so, it is in parts a little naïve. There are eleven chapters, and the first half of the book leads up to the formulation of Dirac's theory of the electron and positron. Strangely enough Relativity precedes Quantum Theory, and the vague impression is given, too, that it was developed before Quantum Theory!

There is confusion between description of atomic states and electron orbits, but this may be a fault in translation only, which is, in fact, loose at times. Indeed, quaint translator's novelties like 'quantifying' and 'physic's greatest attractions' appear now and again. There is however an occasional infelicity by the author in describing experimental work (e.g., p. 57).

Dirac's theory is admirably and lucidly described, and the monograph certainly captures the excitements of nuclear research during the past 40 years. It is curious to find that Blackett's important contributions are missed entirely.

The title is somewhat misleading, since a mere 11 pages are concerned with antimatter. Pictures of nebulae are included with the *ad hoc* statement that their associated radio emission implies annihilation of antimatter. This is far too optimistic a conclusion as yet; equally so is the statement made that fusion temperatures were reached by Zeta in 1958.

Bearing the limitations in mind, the book can be welcomed for the university undergraduate studying physics and will be a welcome refresher for teachers. It is well worth the small sum it costs. Misprints are few and not serious.

S. TOLANSKY

## FROM THE JOURNAL OF 1861

VOLUME IX. 7th June

### THE LAST VISIT OF THE PRINCE CONSORT

[*The inception of the International Exhibition of 1862 proved to be the Prince Consort's last major undertaking. On 5th June, 1861, he visited the Society's House to preside at a meeting convened to hear a paper on the Exhibition by William Haaves, and from the Chair spoke what now seems his valedictory to the Society. He died on 14th December following. (Lord Granville was a Trustee and Commissioner for the Exhibition, and Sir Thomas Phillips the serving Chairman of Council.)*]

EARL GRANVILLE, K.G.: . . . There is one point, however, connected with the meeting to-night that I may be allowed to advert to, namely, the great gratification, and I may say the gratitude, which the Commissioners for the Exhibition of 1862 feel towards the Society of Arts for the meeting which is held here to-night, for the subject chosen for the meeting, and for the presence of His Royal Highness presiding on this occasion. There is much that I could say, if His Royal Highness were not present, with regard to his connection with the Exhibition of 1851; but all who were connected with the working of that Exhibition, will, I am sure, feel that it is not the phrase of compliment, but the strict and naked truth, when I say that but for the personal qualities, the moral courage, the industry, and, above all, the knowledge which His Royal Highness possessed on this subject, combined with the position he held, that Exhibition not only could not have attained the great success it did, but must have proved an utter and lamentable failure . . . if the feeling had once got abroad that Her Majesty and His Royal Highness did not entertain the same cordial good wishes for the success of this [1862] Exhibition that they did for the former one, it would have damped the feelings of all—whether those connected with the administration or those who were called upon to exhibit. I think the answer given this evening, by the presence of His Royal Highness at this meeting, is . . . conclusive. . . .

SIR THOMAS PHILLIPS: . . . I cannot conclude without addressing a few observations to you, Sir, personally. Undeserved praise would, I am sure, be as distasteful to your Royal Highness as to any other person in this room; but I feel bound, on the part of the Council, whose organ I am, to express, in the presence of this meeting, a grateful sense of the assistance which we have received from you at every stage of this undertaking. Whenever counsel was needed, and whenever the influence of your Royal Highness's position was required, the benefit of that counsel and of that influence was given. I will say no more than to express, on the part of this meeting, the grateful sense we entertain of the confidence which the contributors to the fund have reposed in us, and the readiness with which they undertook to

supply the funds, and thereby secure, as I believe, the success of the International Exhibition of 1862.

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRESIDENT said: After having heard the interesting observations which have fallen from the gentlemen who have addressed the meeting this evening, it is not my intention to trouble you with any lengthened remarks of my own. Lord Granville has referred to the fact of my presence here as giving an evidence of my interest in the success of the coming Exhibition of 1862. I should be sorry to leave you to draw, as it were by inference, a conclusion from my presence alone that I take that interest, and I wish you to hear from my own mouth that I do take that interest. As to what Sir Thomas Phillips has said with regard to what I have been able to do to start you on the right road, I have done with great willingness and pleasure; and I can assure you it is a real privation to me to be prevented, by the avocations and duties of my position, from being able to give the same amount of time and labour to this Exhibition that I was privileged to give to the one that preceded it. Gentlemen, you will succeed. You are in earnest; and being in earnest you will succeed. I can congratulate you upon the steps that you have taken. You have got an able body of managers, with all of whom I am well acquainted; and I know from personal acquaintance that they are thoroughly conversant with the work which you have imposed upon them. You have got an able architect, in a young officer of Engineers, who has, as Lord Granville says, to-day shown by the works which have been opened in the Horticultural Gardens, that he is capable of vast designs, of novel contrivances, and possessed of great taste. Gentlemen, Lord Granville and Sir Thomas Phillips have referred to foreign nations. I happen to know that foreign nations do look with favour upon this Exhibition, and are ready to come and measure their strength with you. I need not repeat the warning and encouragement which Lord Granville has thrown out to the manufacturers and artists of this country, to do their utmost, in order to maintain the position which they so gloriously took on the last occasion. Gentlemen, the duty which I have now to perform is a short and pleasing one. It is that of asking you to return thanks to Mr. Hawes for his able and valuable paper. He has taken a comprehensive view of all the points which it is of importance for us to consider with regard to the great undertaking before us, and has expressed his hopes of the success of the undertaking, based upon what I believe to be a perfectly true picture, and I may be allowed to say a most gratifying picture, of the progress of this nation. I beg to propose the thanks of the meeting to Mr. Hawes for the paper he has read.

### *Some Activities of Other Societies and Organizations*

#### MEETINGS

MON. 29 MAY. Royal Geographical Society, 1 Kensington Gore, S.W.1. 8.30 p.m. David Attenborough: *Travels in Madagascar*.

THURS. 1 JUN. Royal Society, Burlington House, W.1. 4.30 p.m. D. W. Dresser: *A study of the adoptive secondary response to a protein antigen in mice*; and M. F. A. Woodruff: *Effect of the graft-versus-host reaction on the immunological responsiveness of the mouse*.

THURS. 8 JUN. Physics, Institute of, and Physical Society (Acoustics Group), at Physics Department, Imperial College of Science and Technology, Prince Consort Road, S.W.7. 5.30 p.m. Dr. W. L. Nyborg: *Biophysical applications of non-linear acoustics*.

Royal Society, Burlington House, W.1. 4.30 p.m. D. J. Bradley: *The rapid measurement of intensity with an oscillating Fabry-Perot spectrometer: isotope abundance in mercury*; and A. H. Cook: *Precise measurements of the density of mercury at 20°C II. Content method*.

FRI. 9 JUN. Visual Education, Council for, at Royal Society of Arts. 3 p.m. The Rt. Honble. Henry Brooke: *The importance of good design*. The Council invites Fellows of the Royal Society of Arts to attend the Meeting and afterwards have tea with C.V.E.

Fellows who would like to do so are asked to advise Mr. C. B. Willcocks, 47 St. Peter's Avenue, Caversham Heights, Reading, by 5th June that they will be present and if they will stay to tea.

THURS. 15 JUN. Royal Society, Burlington House, W.1. 4.30 p.m. A. J. Shannon: *The national institutes of health—programmes and problems*.

#### OTHER ACTIVITIES

NOW UNTIL SUN. 20 AUG. Bethnal Green Museum, Cambridge Heath Road, E.2. *An exhibition of British journalism*.

TUES. 30 MAY–SAT. 10 JUN. Council of Industrial Design, at Ceylon Tea Centre, 22 Regent Street, S.W.1. Exhibition: *Hand-dyed and printed textiles by Susan Bosence and Annette Kol*.

WED. 31 MAY–SAT. 24 JUN. Embroiders' Guild, at Royal Water-Colour Society Galleries, 26 Conduit Street, W.1. *Exhibition of work*.

FRI. 2 JUN.–FRI. 26 JUN. Commonwealth Institute, South Kensington, S.W.7. *Exhibition of paintings by Williams Culbert*.

MON. 26 JUN.–SAT. 22 JUL. The Design Centre, 28 Haymarket, S.W.1. Exhibition: *The Solicitor's office*.

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